Brewster Ghiselin

BRIDGE INTO THE SEA

In "The River," that part of *The Bridge* which is perhaps the major achievement of Hart Crane's poem, certain tramps are represented, men knowing intimately the earth's body—the earth of America: "Hobo-trekkers that forever search/An empire wilderness of freight and rails. . . . /—As I have trod the rumorous midnights, too." Possibly a part of Crane's interest in them came of his recognition of their resemblance, however obscure or slight, to himself. "Each seemed a child, like me. . . . Holding to childhood like some termless play." These men seem not to belong to the noonday. Almost fantasmal, they haunt the American place, ghostly survivors of the American story—for they are "pioneers in time's despite," but seekers who never find, since "They win no frontier." Without tangible position or solid accomplishment in the world, they exist a little apart, as if they had lost some connection with the whole American life the ideal development of which *The Bridge* purports to celebrate. They never ride the coaches that span the continent. They watch "the tail lights wizen and converge" or "jolted from the cold brake-beam" they die. With silt and roots and "floating niggers" they are drawn down by the Mississippi, which drinks away the substance of the very continent, into the waters of the Gulf. With others, they "feed the River timelessly."

Despite their momentary prominence in the poem, they seem even less than unimportant. Crane refers to them as "Blind fists of nothing." And their disappearance seems inconsequential, a slight contribution amid all the tribute of earth to water. Yet what happens to them is of considerable import, as I hope to show.

There are other pioneers in the poem. Most significant is that first American pioneer, Columbus himself, whose exalted meditation as he approaches the shores of Spain form Part I of *The Bridge*. The

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voyage of Columbus, a journey yielding knowledge of a new world, is made to stand in *The Bridge* as type or pattern of a search undertaken by Crane's protagonist, a search for the full meaning of the master image of the poem, the symbolic Bridge. In pursuit of that essential knowledge, past and present are to be caught up into one integration and transmuted in an insight definitive of a worthy American destiny—a new world.

The Columbian voyage is a symbol well adapted to the expression of Crane's conscious intention, conquest of fresh meaning. The Bridge, the Span which by figurative extension unites the disparate parts of the physical continent and unifies the spiritual continent of men, is also a ship, means of passage and preservation amid the chaos of the waters. It is like that ship on whose ocean-spanning deck Columbus stands meditating "between two worlds," which are to be joined by his voyage:

> *For here between two worlds, another, harsh,*
> *This third, of water, tests the word. . . .*

Columbus found his new world, and by completing his voyage he opened the way to a new continent. Crane aspired to do likewise: penetrating into the unknown, to discover a new Cathay.

But he did not clearly see all that was involved in the way he had chosen. Or it is as if he had seen and could not face the truth, that the voyage which leads to his goal is a dark encounter with chaotic waters, a night passage, into disorder and doubt, the "eyes / Starved wide on blackened tides. . . . " That truth appears in the poem, but so veiled and distorted that it is impossible to believe that Crane understood his own expression of it. Again and again the protagonist is drawn to the water. But the black sea is too forbidding. Living, he will not dive into the sea. When as voyager he stands on a benighted deck, only twice and very briefly, in "Southern Cross" and "Atlantis," his eyes cling to the wake.

The encounter with dark waters, either in a night voyage or a dive into unknown depths, is a familiar symbol in psycho-analytical literature. It is often thought of as a bath of renewal, because it represents the first stage of an experience in which refreshment and readjustment are attained through subordinating to the psychic life as a whole the fixed, strictly determined, self-perpetuating elements of consciousness. The voyage or the dive symbolizes a surrender of con-

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sciousness in a search for the unconscious life. Some such yielding of the determinate to the indeterminate is a necessary step in all inner development, including that which takes place in invention, in the creative process. Whether in art or thought, a disordering, or a suspension of order, precedes the attainment of fresh insight. Crane's impulse toward the waters is thus understandable as essentially right and normal. It is part of his human need as a creative individual.

In his conscious intention, Crane did not commit his protagonist to the adventure into darkness. Yet the encounter with the chaos of the sea is the most compelling theme of *The Bridge*: not the consciously accepted theme of order established, but the theme of order destroyed. It elicits Crane's profoundest excitement and sustains his greatest poetry. That theme appears most clearly in "The River." The poem begins with images of "the cultural confusion of the present," as Crane himself declared. His own comment on his poem is instructive: "My tramps are psychological vehicles, also. Their wanderings, as you will notice, carry the reader into interior after interior, all of it funneled by the Mississippi. They are the left-overs of the pioneers in at least this respect—that abstractly their wanderings carry the reader through certain experiences roughly parallel to that of the traders, adventurers, Boone and others. I think I have caught some of the essential spirit of the Great Valley here, and in the process have approached the primal world of the Indian, which emerges with a full orchestra in the succeeding 'Dance.' " The tramps lead us across space and time, into legendary depths. It is a descent into the American origins of the poet's imagination. But it is something further, for it goes beyond the legend, goes into the waters of the funnelling Mississippi, which drags the continent and its creatures into the sea where all form and substance physical and psychical, the shapes of things and the memory of things, are dissolved:

> *The River, spreading, flows—and spends your dream.*
> *What are you, lost within this tideless spell?*
> *You are your father's father, and the stream—*

Precisely that: lost in the racial stream, you are identified with your ancestors in the course of a regression toward the depths of the impersonal psychic life, the sea, which Crane represented as the goal of the River.

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This approach to dissolution is one of the most firmly established things in the poem. The Bridge leads in due course across the land, in apparent affirmation of the integrity it purports to symbolize. Yet in the very heart of the continent the land is denied, dragged into the Gulf, deserted for the sea. The Bridge becomes therefore a bridge into the waters of oblivion, a projection over which all of the established world might have been made to walk the plank.

But the piracy did not succeed. The tramps, "pioneers in time's despite," express the direction of Crane's own creative development, his orientation toward the deeps of the psyche. But Crane did not grasp their significance and exploit it. The theme of dissolution is not realized fully either here or elsewhere in *The Bridge*. For, though Crane desired intensely to surrender himself to the sea, it seemed to him that only the dead attain that goal. The beloved Bridge, his ship, became a prison, because he would not allow it to carry him into the darkness of the unlimited sea.

Crane's reluctance to indulge his impulse toward the water appears to have been determined not only by deathly fear but by an excessive attachment to the established order. The explanation may lie in the fact of his sexual inversion. In terms of jargon currently used to describe such situations, he was rejected by his successful father, felt himself an outcast, and identified himself with his mother, in a distorting psychic attachment. For normally the boy identifies himself with his father. There are two obvious ways of adjustment in such a predicament: to win the love of the father or of someone like him—some man, or to destroy the father, as Oedipus destroyed his father in the story, and to possess the mother.

The predicament of the male invert is an ambivalence of hostility and love directed toward the father, the image of authority in the child's world. There is evidence that Crane attempted in *The Bridge* a reconciliation with that authority which is equivalent to the father in the adult world, the established system or way of life. *The Bridge* celebrates on American legend and, to some extent, perhaps never without reservations, the forms and achievements of the present age. Particularly significant is the fact that the images embodying Crane's aspiration toward a redeeming order are creations of the current way of life, bridge and airplane.

Perhaps Crane's hindering fear of the sea may likewise be traced

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to his inversion. In "Voyages, II" death and desire are paired, and the poem ends with the implication that attainment comes only with death, "in the vortex of our grave." Yet if we may venture the Freudian speculation that fear of incest and the vengeful father repelled Crane from the sea, we need not reduce our explanation to that hypothesis. Certainly I would avoid the absurdity of explaining *The Bridge* as a poetic amplification of the phantasies of incest and castration. However determined, Crane's failure to develop his understanding of the sea and to submit his concept of the Bridge to the revisions which would have been forced by completed understanding, seems to me to account for the major imperfections of *The Bridge* and for the swift disintegration of the man.

Because he could not endure the descent into chaos, Crane misrepresented the voyage as a wholly conscious adventure. In "Indiana" a young man goes to sea, apparently to return unchanged, bringing nothing new. In "Atlantis" the poet envisaging the Bridge as ship, harp, altar, looks upward in worship and aspiration, and at the end, pathetically enquiring "Is it Cathay?" he remains "floating" becalmed on the terror and temptation of the sea to which he has never wholly committed himself. In "Cape Hatteras" ambivalent engines symbolic of our mechanical achievement are envisaged as "launched" like ships upon the spiritual way of freedom and love defined by Whitman: they "pass out of sight / To course that span of consciousness thou'st named / The Open Road—"

Apart from Crane's assertions, there is nothing to confirm the notion that the voyage of machinery into blank space is related in any way either to Whitman's ideal of brotherhood or to that detached and serene acceptance of experience, including "the delicious nearby freedom of death," which is the spirit of the "Open Road." Hurtled into the false sea of space, the "vast engines" enter that inane toward which the whole conscious aspiration of the poem is lifted, a sphere of freedom which seems nearly illimitable only because it is virtually empty.

A sounder insight into the meaning of the voyage in air is given earlier in "Cape Hatteras." There the conquest of space by the machine is pictured as a triumph of the established world symbolized particularly by the powerful image of the "Cetus-like . . . Dirigible . . . satellited wide / By convoy planes," those "moonferrets" which

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Crane has called "the dragon's covey"—that is, in the terms of familiar symbolism, the children of the Father as enemy. The following passage details the scouting flight of a plane guided by an ace whose mission is "to conjugate infinity's dim rage— / Anew . . . !" He is shot down. This successful assault of established power on the pioneer of new insight pictures exactly the personal defeat of Crane the rejected son. There are various suggestions in "Cape Hatteras" that the sky is a sea, place of adventure and search, but it is a sea dominated by the Whale and in it the choice son of the dragon is destroyed. He falls—not into the ocean, but broken to the earth: "beached heap of high bravery!"

It is a striking fact that the conclusion of "Cape Hatteras," in which transmutation of the mechanical way of modern life has been proclaimed but not demonstrated, is followed by a song of agonized appeal and hopeless longing addressed to the "Woman of the South." Like the Southern Cross, a constellation lying, for us, as Cathay did for Crane's Columbus, under the horizon—beneath the sea, she belongs to the waters. Approached in a night voyage in which disintegration is represented as begun but not as completed, she is never found: she and the Southern Cross that watched the night sea are drowned in light, in the return to full consciousness.

Despite his self-deceptions, Crane could not altogether conceal the truth. The sea drew him, in horror and fascination. The intensity and exaltation of "Ave Maria," the splendor of the chant that concludes "The River," indicate that he sensed that his salvation was the sea. The poetry most false to this insight—"Indiana" and the conclusion of "Cape Hatteras"—is his weakest.

Crane's passion for the sea was not repressible for long. It gives his poem an obscure but vital coherence. Most of what has been baffling in the structure of *The Bridge,* including much apparent confusion and discontinuity, is clarified into pattern when understood as a consequence of the vacillation produced by Crane's central longing and revulsion.

These forces operate, unfortunately, without Crane's full understanding. In the mind of the derelict sailor of "Cutty Sark," the poet or his protagonist sees "frontiers gleaming," but immediately questions their existence, envisaging the apparent contrary of "running sands," an image suggesting the flowing chaos of debris, dead bodies,

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roots and "silted shale" dragged seaward by the River. In "The River" the images of disorder contribute to the whole triumphant imaginative conversion of form into its opposite, which at last takes on the aspect of a goal and defines itself as the Gulf; in "Cutty Sark" the disorder is unattractive, a senseless shifting apparently leading nowhere. Here the sea of earth is repellent, and when the sailor staggers away to his ship, the poet is apparently altogether justified in taking his different way, landward over the Bridge. The rest of "Cutty Sark," the "calligramme of ships" seen by the poet "Walking home across the Bridge," has superficially the appearance of an afterthought. Crane himself seems to have had nearly this view of it, since he described the passage to Otto Kahn as "simply a lyrical apostrophe to a world of loveliness forever vanished." It is, however, strictly relevant, being no less than a vision of the poet's ultimate success foregone, the clipper ships of a "phantom regatta" laden with the "opium and tea" of China, the spoils of Cathay which he will never reach because he persists in turning away from the sea.

Repeatedly in *The Bridge* a tone of sadness, depression, or weariness marks the denial of the sea. At the center of the melancholy dearth and decay of "Quaker Hill" stands that American mansion "old Mizzentop, palatial white / Hostelry," a deserted and stranded ship. Even more somber is the following encounter with American life, in "The Tunnel," a subway journey to the water's edge. Here Poe's City in the Sea, a city of the dead as yet unsunken beside spiritless waters, symbolizes the deathly arrest of our civilization sustained by "phonographs of hades in the brain," "tunnels that re-wind themselves." The journey through that narrow hell of self-perpetuating disorganization cannot bring release. Beyond it, however, is open water. Having passed through the tunnel underworld, the poet emerges beside "the River that is East," that is Cathay and is, of course, a part of the Atlantic Ocean. His goal is immediately before him. But though his hands "drop memory" and lie in the abyss of water, he goes no further, does not descend into it.

In the final section of *The Bridge,* the terms of fulfillment are intimated, but not accepted. There the "whitest Flower, . . . Anemone, . . . Atlantis"—the "Atlantis Rose" of "Cutty Sark"—the flower which like Atlantis lies beneath the water, and which stands for the Absolute or Eternity, as Crane explained to Otto Kahn, is

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called on to "hold thy floating singer late." This is the cosmic flower, symbol of psychic wholeness, the self-possession of the soul. How shall it be attained? Not by an excursion into open space, in boundless aspiration, nor by regression into the past, though the journey lead beyond personal memory into the legendary simplicities of the mind. Since the flower lies beneath the sea, it is to be attained only by descent into the waters. But for reasons already explained that descent was impossible to Crane. At the conclusion of *The Bridge,* having approached the sea many times but never having committed himself to it, the poet—or his protagonist—remains in ambiguous suspension floating at the surface of the water.

It is exactly the position defined in "Voyages, II" where the poet, renouncing every "earthly shore," awaits revelation in a sea death, in "the vortex of our grave." In *The Bridge* Crane struggled to bring about a development beyond that position, but he failed in everything except the confirmation of his fate, the necessity of finding fulfillment in a death by water.

The answer to Crane's final question "Is it Cathay?" is that the flower is indeed Cathay and that the poet has not attained it. Cathay lies at the end of a trial by water. The treasure, the flower Atlantis, must be recovered from the bottom of the sea, by one who is willing and able to descend to it, braving chaos. Perhaps in his ordeal such a one would discover the flower to be precisely the feared act of descent, desertion of the ship and dependence upon the unformulated life of the deeps. And perhaps thereafter he would be seen buoyed on the water, a "floating singer." But there is a great difference between one who floats but who has never entirely entrusted himself to the water and one who floats but has given himself to it. The latter has risen from death. The former is delaying death, and his reprieve is his defeat.

Crane ceased to write much, his life lost force and meaning. Apparently not wholeheartedly, he attempted suicide, choosing poison first. Then at last he found his way: suicide by leaping from the deck of the *Orizaba,* into the Gulf where he had already drowned so much. The *Orizaba* became his bridge into the sea. What he could not do directly and fully as an artist, he did in his symbolic death: he found his way to the waters. But it was an imperfect attainment.

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Bryan MacMahon

TWO STORIES

EVENING IN IRELAND

The mountains were thrown higgledy piggledy into the distance, where the sea was. The white dusty road wound around the flank of the near valley and fell gracefully away to the one-arched bridge below. Among the tufted oaks on the Pass the church lurked. A cluster of thatched houses crouched about it. Bird song had shrivelled and died. From behind the hill across the valley came the cries of the young men hurling. The Sunday sun was falling to the far west.

Down the road came the old priest. He was walking slowly. He was a sandy gray man with lush eyebrows. His lips moved in prayer as his eyes found and lost the words in the breviary. From time to time his eyes wandered over the breviary and over the spectacles down the long curve of the white road.

A young man came upwards from the bridge. On his back he carried a sack. There was a hole in the sack and a turkey's head protruded into the sunlight. The priest squeezed up his eyes and saw the man clearly. At the same time the young man spied the priest. He ceased his whistling and threw aside his slouch. The sack was jerked one notch higher on his shoulder. He crossed to the road margin opposite to that on which the priest was walking. The priest and the man came closer and closer. The young man pulled the visor of his cap down over his eyes and tried to sneak past. Unaccountably the priest was on the road before him. The young man tipped his cap with a forefinger. His lips mumbled something.

The priest screwed his face a few times. This was designed to wring the sun out of his features. Also to intimidate the young man. The priest said, with a soft harshness: "Who have I?"

"Dick Lynch, Father."

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"Are you a son of Dick the River or a son of Dick the White Stile?"

"Dick the River, Father."

"What have you in the sack?"

"A turkey hen, Father."

"Where are you taking her?"

A pause. A glint. A sudden spurt of brave speech. "To the cock, Father."

The priest eyed the young man narrowly. The young man held his face to a sterling gravity as the priest walked all around him. The turkey hen and the priest looked at one another. The bird closed her eyes so that they were two white discs. She seemed grotesquely to be mimicking a sleeping doll.

The priest returned to the boy's face. "H'm!" he said again. Then, "Are you married?"

"No, Father."

"I wouldn't doubt you! How many in family are ye?"

"Six, Father."

"What way are ye divided?"

"Four girls and two boys, Father."

"Are the girls older or younger than you?"

"The three eldest are girls, Father. The last girl is younger than me."

"Any of them married?"

"No, Father."

"Tck! Tck! Tck! That's right! Mate yeer turkeys and yawn yeerselves. Keep on that way let ye until ye're tall gray curmudgeons fit for nothing else but to stone a braddy cow out of a garden. Tck! Is it blind ye are? Will ye look at the brambles drooping with heavy blackberries?"

The young man eyed the blackberries.

"Did you ever hear what the Almighty God said to Adam and Eve?"

"I forget, Father."

"I'd engage but you would! You wouldn't forget the ballad of "Big Mick's Cow"! What kind of people are ye at all? Do ye want to have me, or the man that comes after me here, parsing the parables to the red varnish of the pews and talking to himself about the

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road from Jericho to Jerusalem? And the thatch mouldering on the roofs around the house of God." A pause for breath. Then: "Your eldest sister—what name have ye on her?"

"Pidge, Father."

"Is she the one that has the black hair like this?" The priest made some gesture indicative of unusual coiffure.

"Yes, Father."

"Shoving on into years she is. Isn't she?"

"She is, Father."

"She'll never see thirty again?"

"She won't, Father."

"Is she keeping company with anyone?"

"Not to my knowledge, Father."

"Ne'er a one in her eye?"

"I'd say not, Father."

"H'm! Do you know Denis Sullivan of Parkeen?"

"Denisheen the Dog, is it, Father?"

"Dog! Dog! Dog! Dog! What dog, man?"

"He have a dog, Father: a black and white dog."

"I'm asking if you know him?"

"I do, Father."

"Nine cows, he has?"

"Yes, Father."

"Lovely warm ground. In good heart. Tucks of running water."

"Ay, Father."

"Enough fowl to blacken the air?"

"Yes, Father."

"A tub trap and a roan pony?"

"He has so, Father."

"And a Department bull?"

The farmer became paramount in the young man. "Let me tell you something, Father. That same bull is gettin' poorly. He's throwing the world and all of white calves."

The priest bridled up. "And what signifies that? Won't a tuppeny stamp and a small bit of writing swap her? When he's transferred, won't some other parish beside ours breed the pale delicate cattle? Answer me out!"

Meekly, conquered. "That's true, Father."

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"Come now, wouldn't Denisheen the Dog, as you call him, suit your sister Pidge?"

"He might, Father."

"Wouldn't you do an act of charity and put it into her head?"

The young man remained silent.

"Will you tell it to your father, itself?"

"I will indeed, Father."

"Tell him to be doing his duty by ye, will you?"

"I will, Father."

"Tell him that I said if he doesn't look after ye, who will?"

"That's right, Father."

"That's right! That's right! That's right!" the priest said peevishly. "Can ye do anything but agree with me?"

After a moment of irresolute silence, he said brightly: "There's a spark in you. You showed it when you denounced the bull."

The young man smiled under the peak of his cap. The turkey hen made a noise that sounded like "Pewtk!"

The priest said: "Were you at Conway's, the gathering house, on Wednesday night?"

Reluctantly, "I was, Father."

"Inside or out?"

"Outside, Father."

"Had ye a raffle?"

"There was a raffle, Father, but I was gone home."

"Oho, you were, you model! H'm! What music had ye?"

"I couldn't get a right glimpse of the musicianers, Father. I'd say it was a man from away up Reesk direction."

"Did a gable of a house collapse up yeer way lately?"

"I didn't hear tell, Father."

"Maybe 'tis some other place I'm thinking of."

"Maybe so, Father."

Silence. The pair looked at one another.

The priest's mouth was giving him a great deal of trouble. All the while his eyes transfixed and intimidated the young man. When he had gained the mastery over his lips he said in a low voice: "Goodbye, son, and God bless you!"

"And you too, Father."

The young man strode steadily up the road. Now and again

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he tugged the sack higher on his shoulder. When he had gone some distance he ventured to look back at the priest. He began to smile broadly. Had he not the makings of an anecdote? Already he was rehearsing it. "What have you in the sack, son?" "A turkey hen, Father." "Where are you taking the turkey hen?" "To the cock, Father." "H'm . . . are you married, son?"

And so on.

The young man threw back his head and laughed aloud.

The priest went down the road. His brown lips again moved to the Latin words that his tongue had rounded with the years. From time to time he made a noise that was half chortle and half chuckle. Suddenly he stopped. Below him in the road he saw a boy and a girl with hands clasped. They were swaying towards one another and away from one another. They had not seen the priest. As yet they were filled with laughter. The priest chuckled fully. Then he looked at the brambles. Then he glanced downroad again. Just above the young couple's head and directly on the bridge he could see a vehement old man striding purposefully towards him, the ferule of his stick striking the road smartly. After these there would be the spillings of bright young men from the goaling. Ay, and behind them again the bevy of young girls who had been watching the hurlers from the fences.

The priest was braced with pleasure. It had the makings of an adventurous evening! Turning, he looked to the left to where the land was flung farthest from him. Already he knew the kind of a sunset there would be. It would be a perfect ending to the day. Soon the great air would fine down from the zenith through swaths of apple-green and orange to where tea-time was scrawled in indigo on the western hills.

THE FOXY LAD

It was an angry night with the sky in tatters. Now and again a bitter shake of raindrops came sharp and sudden, like a fistful of thrown grain. The moon scudded westward towards the sea —the tall houses of the square blazed and blackened in its unpre-

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dictable light. The street lights were murky and bad and brown; they seemed affected by the wind's long hullahoo. Into the torn heavens the steeple raised a black admonishing finger.

By the railings of the church a platform had been erected. Its clean timbers were startlingly white in the square's gloom: there was also a good glow from the new windsor chairs upon it. A few noisy boys danced provocatively on the platform while the mock-furious man who was protecting the microphone kept chasing them away. The boys' boots made a loud racket in the enclosed hollow place.

On a dead wall in the west side of the square (where *he* could not fail to see it) was a slogan in whitewash. An unsuccessful attempt had been made to obliterate it but it came up with the stubborness of writing beneath writing. The slogan asked the people to remember the man who was executed. The people did not need to be reminded of the dead foxy lad; lately they had begun to fancy they saw him in his old resorts, on river-bank and in ball-alley, on cinema-step and in organ-loft. Since his execution the laughing foxy lad had suddenly become possessed of a physical wispishness.

The square remained quite empty until the drums came bumbling up the hill towards the town: then the townspeople— mostly working men and shawled women—began to filter softly into the area. Their neutral boots explained their motive for coming as a type of rancorous curiosity. They drifted slowly along by the walls of the shops, past the darkened pharmacy where the veterinary window was dressed with iodized mineral licks, past the window of the hardware shop where the fingers of a mowing machine were so many sullen daggers, past the shoemaker's where a pair of ruby uppers had lighted their quiet lamps in the darkness. The seep of the townspeople continued thus until all the black shutters and crannies and recesses of the square were filled. The people stood quietly, betraying their presence only when a cigarette glowed slowly and thoughtfully or when a woman dragged her shawl higher over her head.

The boys had long since ceased their din and had raced across the square to meet the band. The sound of the drums grew immense —then through the slots of the night wind leaked the timid whinny of the fifes. The band crashed into the square. After a few minutes the morose undemonstrative watchers were able to see the procession

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in its entirety. There following the band was the large black car. So he *had* come! Yes, but how many paraffin-soaked sods blazing on fork-prongs? Eight. (Nineteen the last time). How many cars? Sixteen. (Thirty-one the last time). And even in the band, there were gaps. And those who knew the usual power of the drummer's stroke fancied that he was beating with half-zeal, as if the strength of his arm had been sapped by the memory of the dead foxy lad.

But credit where credit was due—he *had* come! There were those who had said that he would avoid the angry town. But fair play, bonny play, it must be admitted that he had spunk! The watchers shuffled their shoes in irresolution. What with the reverberations of the band and the flashing of the torches and headlights, the foxy lad wasn't having things all his own way. It was suddenly patent to the townspeople that accurate leadership was an engaging thing—a something that their spirits hankered after. Their bitterness began to dissolve. They watched the procession curl the plaftorm, heard the band cut sharply, saw the leader mount the platform steps, measured the sharp rattle of partisan applause. They saw him smiling among the men on the platform, shake hands here and there and finally take his seat. Sitting, he was dwarfed. This physical smallness was a recurrent puzzle to them. It was a thing that came hard on them to forgive him. Traditionally, their leaders had been tall, thunderous and grandiose.

The chairman spoke: his speech was a failure. Being a local man he was confronted with the task of over-compensating his secret doubts. The vehemence with which he invested minor statements seemed unnecessary. Also, he misjudged the correct distance of his mouth from the microphone: the result was that his voice emerged either in whale-ish unintelligible blahs or in skull-splitting crackles. He irritated the folk at the walls. They were glad when he had finished. Another speaker followed: he was weak, meek and nondescript. At length the leader stood up and advanced to the microphone. The applause rang out sharply like gunfire: it posed the same problems as gunfire. The ensuing silence was utter. A motor car swished down a wet sidestreet and into the square: its headlights set fire to the paintwork of the tall walls. A vicious handful of raindrops was pelted at the platform. The leader looked up at the night sky but no more rain followed. He began to speak.

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He spoke calmly, confidently, and with dispassionate sincerity on many topics: on the sowing of the grain, the development of the fisheries, the division of the ranches, and the resuscitation of the Gaelic language. Gradually the neutral watchers realized that the quality that had made him leader was concealed in his voice. His speech could squarely be termed quietly florid with rhythmic periods. But his trick of understressing the rhetorical nature of his sentences set his hearers the happy task of bringing the words up to full strength. Each man in the square was thus an orator in his own right. But, after a while, the continued urbanity of the speech made them a trifle sleepy. But its most important attribute was this: in some inexplicable fashion it had the effect of making the vexing question of the dead boy quite ordinary. Little by little the watchers by the walls found themselves being willingly filched of their parochial glorying in the foxy lad: of their pride in his court-room gallantry and of their splendid insanity on the morning of his execution. The leader was laying the ghost of the dead boy! He also kept implying ("implying" since, in fact, he was dealing with fisheries and grain) that justice was as impersonal as mathematics, that its conclusions could not be altered for vivid personality or picturesque circumstance, that indeed (remotest of remote implications) if a foxy lad found himself compelled to act in such and such a fashion, the elected leaders of the people had no other option but to elucidate and underscore the conclusions that justice had already reached. That insofar as justice was concerned, leaders were vouchsafed only the imitativeness of the parrot, the mimicry of the monkey and the stubborness of the bright bold boar.

The sky grew less ragged: aloft there was every evidence of amnesty with an implied promise of no more pelting. Where previously there had been anger and inflammation there now appeared a clean breach in which gleamed the true aluminum stars. Only the breeze up from the swollen river still held an intransigent chill. The people at the walls had long since surrendered their sullenness. They stamped their shoes in disappointment and glanced peevishly at one another in the darkness. The meeting had been a sell.

Then out from the town, walking slowly in mid-road, came an old man and an old woman. The man was a caricature of the national type of old man. He was dressed in a pepper-and-salt suit of square out-of-fashion rig with black shiny buttons. The legs of his trousers

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were narrow and tubular—rather like sections of dark bicycle tubes. His white celluloid collar was throttling him: from time to time he twisted his neck in torment. He wore faded sandy side-burns and an old bowler hat. His wife, a frail emaciated creature dressed in black, was pressed so closely against him that she seemed little more than an umbrella hooked on his forearm. Her dwindled features gave the impression that they had been twisted through a complete revolution and then thrust back on the bones of her face. She was wearing steel-rimmed spectacles and her movements indicated shortsightedness.

On seeing this old couple approaching, the watchers by the walls and in the corners began to thrum with excitement. Just this silhouette had been prominent in their minds since the trial and execution. Now, the delicate crunching of the old couple's boots began to stir the outskirts of the meeting. Men, sparing a moment to glance irritably over their shoulders, suddenly became charged with animation. They started to nudge their neighbors. Before long the periphery of the throng was alive, mobile and electric. A man seated on the platform spoke to his neighbor from behind a cupped hand and, all at once, the heart of the meeting caught the infection. In the meantime the old pair were carefully circling the people as if seeking a convenience of ingress. When finally they began to move inwards towards the platform, the people in their way made road for them quickly and offered them unnecessary room. The leader was gradually aware of the importance of the old people's approach and in order to overcome the distraction of his audience his voice took on additional stress.

"For the language is, primarily, the hallmark of our identity as a separate distinct nation: lost, it cannot be recovered: betrayed, it cannot be redeemed. Due to the peculiar nature of our nation's history, our culture exists neither in fine statuary nor in the excellence of sombre canvases—for rarely has a cruelly oppressed and proscribed people the indolence or the opportunity requisite for the exercise of such arts. Rather does our claim to an individual culture rest upon the living sinuous lithe language that has come down to us across the breached centuries, bequeathed from grandsire to sire and from sire to son in one clean unbroken line. . . . "

The old man and the old woman were now standing in a bare patch, perhaps ten or twelve yards from the platform. They were wholly ringed by the bright coins of the peoples' faces. The erratic

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light of a replenished sod licked tawnily about them. The old man cleared his throat; his wife tightened against him in what seemed the final remnant of loyalty and fierceness. Then he removed his bowler hat and stood there waiting for a pause in the leader's speech.

The crowd was now laced together tight and true. It was vibrant, eager and imaginative. As on a signal the people at the walls had begun to walk out in a long file, sneaking forward on soundless shoes. The moon was shining fair and free; below it in the amended heavens stood two dark dirigibles of cloud.

"For, mark you well, our native tongue is the brightest jewel in the diadem of the nation. By its accretion of shining phrases it is fully fitted to express even the most subtle thoughts of a highly imaginative people. The task before us is crystal clear and admits of no equivocation: it is our solemn duty to roll the bright carpet of the language from sea to sea, to let its lovely colors dance and glow and quiver in the sunlight of freedom. . . . "

The old man's voice broke in quaveringly: "Sir, sir . . . myself and my wife have come up here to ask you to give us back the body of our son."

The speaker paused. There was now no hint of errant wind. High up in the dark rampart of the houses a light flickered on in a rose-petal room and a young woman raised her bare arm and (since she was young, and a woman) reached overlong for the tassel of the blind.

The leader resumed, less surely: "How then can we stand up among the colorful comity of nations? . . . "

"Sir, sir . . . I know you'll excuse us. We didn't come here to make a disturbance. We're old people and we're ignorant of politics and what the young men do be wrangling about. All we ask you for is the body of our son."

The speaker stopped wholly. Below him the burnished faces were all tilted to the same angle. Watching closely, the people saw the leader's fingers move slowly westward along the unplaned handrail. The movement somehow conveyed the analogy of a mind travelling backwards over exhilarating revolutionary years. Watching still more narrowly, the people saw the fingers find and welcome a splinter, saw the fingernails pick at it thoughtfully. Silver cap-badges in the throng had begun to move eastward and westward, converging on the old

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couple. With a decisive and almost curt gesture, the leader motioned them back. He broke off the splinter and essayed speech again.

"If we fail or falter in the labor before us, generations yet unborn shall charge us with the immense negligence. . . . "

This time the old man's voice was almost broken: "Don't refuse us, sir. Before we go the Road—the pair of us—we'd like to know that he'd be buried with his own."

"Scholars as yet unconceived shall vilify us in their golden annals. . . . "

Wheedlingly: "Ah, now, sir, you're refusin' us. . . . "

"Loyally and zestfully as becomes a proud and ancient people we must undertake the lovely labor. . . . "

The old umbrella of a woman momentarily detached herself from her husband's arm. Her voice was a jet of low breeze. "We might as well be idle, Daniel," she said.

The leader's voice poured strongly over the people: "I ask you therefore to hold carefully the brimming chalice of the language. Through your work and in your games! In your labor and in your leisure! I charge those among you who have children. . . . "

The old man shook his head. "Aye!" he repeated, "those among us who have children." The tone of his voice indicated only regret. He donned his hat. "Come, Katie," he said quietly. The old pair turned cumbersomely as if they were a railway engine on a turning table. The people melted before them. On the fringe of the crowd the old man turned and removed his hat. He almost genuflected. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said. "You must believe us—we didn't come here to cause a disturbance." Then, to the people, "Ladies and gentlemen, I beg all of ye'er pardons. I do, indeed."

The old couple walked slowly away. They took with them an unmistakable grandeur and dignity. When the leader tried to begin afresh he found his voice drowned in the jaunty uproar of his heart.

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Henri Michaux

THE MARCH INTO THE TUNNEL *

First Canto

I heard words in the darkness. They had the gravity of perilous situations involving important personages in the dead of night.

They were saying—these words—in the obscure shadow. They were saying confusedly. They were all saying: "Woe! Woe!" and did not cease, crying always "Woe! Woe!"

I saw a man in bed and his disease was saying to him:

"Wretch," she was saying, "don't you know that your festering kidneys, your true enemies, are putting, from now on, your death to bed with you. You will know my name later, but the beak of the urinary bird inside you begins to peck and you will pay dear for what little you've had. . . . "

Then I heard a stronger voice saying:

"Go, don't delay, here is only one man. Elsewhere there are thousands and thousands of thousands and still more of them and all in great danger.

"Don't let yourself be distracted but look. After all, you have to live your little life inside."

Then a voice burst out which was not recognizable and the flowers of life began to stink, and the sun was no more than a memory, an old mat put behind a door that you won't go through again, and men, almost losing their faith, were silent, were silent with a silence which takes your breath away, the kind that comes in summertime, at evening in the country, when after the last birds, and then the last insects, of the day have gone in, and before those of the night have come, a tomblike silence suddenly falls.

A little later it began to sizzle.

* Selections from a longer poem.

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From this moment on, death and its daily mowings were great.

Enormous holes like overturned hills suddenly took shape. Houses, as if losing weight, vanished into thin air. And their inhabitants, what can be said of them? . . . For them the wound of being man was closing.

One scratched in vain at the door of tomorrow and the present screamed.

It was cold that year.

Miles of playful mugs, lined up on the snow of the continent, did not know what expression to take. The northeast winter wind, too strong for their basal metabolism, blew sovereignly.

Strength was everywhere but distress was screwed inside.

Waters were hurt, airs were hurt. Terrified tunnyfish deserted their customary seas and eagles, making themselves small, fled with a flutter of wings.

Metal had never been so hard, powder had never been so violent. They fell on the crowds together and men halted by death sank down to rise no more in this century.

But farther off everything continued.

Tops were spinning steadily under implacable whips.

Second Canto

Ideas were pressing against one another like rams. Hate had a sanitary pace. Old age drew laughter and the child was encouraged to bite. The world was all flags.

There had once been men who took their time, burning logs peacefully in old chimneys, reading charming novels where others do the suffering. Those times were over. In this century armchairs burned and the barbed contentment of the rich of this world no longer offered any defense.

It was cold for everyone this year. This was the first total winter.

Hope gushed out for better or worse. But since events didn't give a damn, like a brute who rips off bandage and flesh and draining tube all at once, it was necessary to begin again to suffer without hope.

Here and there a dim light shone, but the wave from below which would carry off everything still did not rise.

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As for the peoples, some were winning, others dying, but all remained bound up in a misery which encircled the earth.

The race of Wisdom was not spared.

Trapped unawares, they fought year after year, their millennial patience tried by an extra hard test.

The Predestined people, too, suffered, and first of all. They were bereft of everything even their shirt. People laughed at them and turning round, accused them of being the origin of misfortunes.

The people of perfect Temples had everything taken, even their olives.

Heads were stuffed with folderol.

As the sea never wearies of pounding the shore with useless waves, so this great battle pushed ever forward in fresh ranks.

Faltering advances which advanced to nothing, staggering retreats which stopped at the void.

No one had ever seen so many sword blows in water.

The reins of humanity were floating haphazardly about, but still, but everywhere, under the various faces, was the Father, the chief, when his authoritarian life sinks like an oar into his family which says nothing.

Third Canto

The year was like a wall in front of the race of men.

The earth was milt to the top, and you could not manage to bring your head out from it.

And yet people were working and working as they had never worked, without looking at the sun, without looking at their time which was flowing inexorably, and were working harder, were being pushed to work harder, shoveling, shoveling unceasingly under the gigantic hemorrhage; and death was coming casually to an end like a worn-out cloth, like a worn-out cloth being unravelled or like a bill that you had forgotten which somebody hands you just as you open the door.

The storekeeper civilization was stubborn. It was said to be cracking up. But while cracking up it was stubborn.

Meanwhile this statistical century was counting, counting, counting

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at wit's end, counting grains, trains, tons, babies, calves, wheels, shoulders for bearing arms.
A permit was necessary to get a mouthful of bread.

Thirteenth Canto

Shelters are numerous. Unsheltered places are still more numerous.
A plain rich in men is mowed by a round of artillery.
But humanity, numerous although fewer than the rats, is out there presenting itself, an impressive reservoir.
Fresh troops, new blood.
Between the hedges of flags, between the hates of flags, there it goes, filing off to the next rotting-place. . . .
As a school of tunnyfish in the trapping area, beside an interminable net, believing itself prudent, goes off all the same without suspicion into the chamber of death where, crowded by new arrivals, they fight furiously, vainly, attacking those closest to them, so humanity, while making its promising accounts and statistics, enters methodically into its charnel house.

Twentieth Canto

Look! the harsh Epoch has come, harsher than the harsh lot of man.
The Epoch has come indeed.
I will make their houses into junk heaps, says a voice.
I will make their vessels that sail the sea into stones that sink quickly.
I will make their families into terrified hordes.
I will make their riches into what mites make of a fur, leaving only the spectre, which falls into dust at the slightest movement.
I will make their happiness into a dirty sponge which must be thrown out, and their plans of other days, compressed more than the body of a flea, will persecute their days and nights.
I will really and truly make death glide and woe to him who finds himself under its wings.
I will throw down their gods in a monstrous overthrow and in their scattered fragments they will find gods whom they did not know about and whose loss will make them suffer even more.

(*Translated by Richard Ellmann*)

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Wylie Sypher

NIETZSCHE AND SOCRATES IN MESSINA

Shakespeare did not often arrange his comic affairs more recklessly than he did in Messina, where Benedick and Beatrice occupy themselves with cutting Cupid's bowstring, and the outrageous Claudio slanders his bride Hero in the full congregation where he should wed; then Dogberry will be writ down for an ass and thus save the whole preposterous business from the black and surly devices of the bastard Don John. Apparently the comic structure of *Much Ado About Nothing* will not bear many of the external stresses of criticism; at least no one would have thought so until the current re-examinations of Shakespearian drama. Perhaps we may go further and say that one of the great critical attainments of the twentieth century has been its new understanding of comedy. We have not been able to write tragedy, but we have been reading Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, and Kafka very intently and have perceived the absurdity of man's situation, an almost intolerable comedy where pain is wisdom. We have resurrected the Fool—original impotence and innocence; guilt, pathos, and triumph. The bloody clowns of Rouault have their roles upon the modern scene. Nietzsche, we have remembered, felt that our deepest insights must appear as folly. And folly usually wears the mask—the comic mask.

In beginning to speak about *Much Ado*, we do not need to be portentous and invoke Kierkegaard or Innocence, for the scene in Messina rings as loudly as any in Shakespeare with the silvery laughter of Meredith's comic faun, who surely contrived these high-spirited passages between Benedick and the shrewish Beatrice. This bright laughter of the nineteenth-century faun is not a thoughtless hilarity. Meredith accepted comedy as the ultimate civilizer; he insisted that to enjoy high comedy at all "you must have a sober liking of your

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kind and a sober estimate of our civilized qualities." If we enter Messina with any sober estimate of our civilized qualities, we are apt to regard matters there with discriminations we usually reserve for the darker areas of Shakespeare, those not so clearly in the comic radiance. Meredith did not have the advantage of our knowingness about social contexts and ambiguities, but he saw that "the comic poet is in the narrow field, or enclosed square, of the society he depicts; and he addresses the still narrower enclosure of men's intellects, with reference to the operation of the social world upon their characters." Within the enclosed narrow field of Messina the address to our intellect is quite as direct, though not so dialectic, as in *Measure for Measure* or any of the admitted problem plays. We sense, however, that intellectual as the atmosphere may be, the Meredithian enclosure is a little too narrow and remote. The comedy that is the ultimate civilizer is a little graver and crueller and more pathetic than Meredith suspected; it is more melancholy and human, and, for us, man is more the clown and fool. Comedy is the human condition. Thus, with our heightened uneasy sense of the ridiculous we can, if we look more closely, observe how the reckless arrangements in Messina fracture the Meredithian enclosure and become versions of a more complete human drama. *Much Ado* is a unique adjustment—at least unique in Shakespeare—of the extremities that the clown may occupy; extremities we might call Nietzschean and Socratic.

II

While Meredith was announcing the comic spirit as the ultimate civilizer, Nietzsche the immoralist, the essential destroyer, the man of destiny was transvaluing all social values by his own frightening comedy. "I do not wish to be a saint," he wrote. "I would much rather be a clown. Perhaps I am a clown." In fact Nietzsche, assuming the mask, performed for the nineteenth century the role of comic *eiron*—the mocker of the good, the benevolent, the decent Philistines, complacent and cultured. In Nietzsche the frantic laughter of Dionysus resounded against the Christian will to hypocrisy: "I am in no way a moral monster," protested this fierce buffoon. "It is true that my nature is in direct contrast to the sort of man who has hitherto been honored as virtuous. But between ourselves, it seems to me that this is precisely a reason for pride. I am a disciple of the philosopher

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Dionysus, and I would sooner be a satyr than a saint." So far his vocation was Socratic; he was the gadfly given by God to plague the bourgeoisie. His mask was that of the destroyer, the misanthropist, the tempter; and his comedy was Mephistophelian. "I am by far the most terrible man that has ever existed; but this does not negate the fact that I shall be the most beneficent. I know the joy of annihilation to a degree commensurate with my power to annihilate."

If the Nietzschean vocation was Socratic, the Nietzschean comedy was not. Socrates the *eiron,* the dissembler, the mocker, was the devotee of Apollo and the dialectic. Nietzsche was the votary of Dionysus the ecstatic, the exuberant, the possessed. The Nietzschean comedy is a neurosis: "Seeking for my highest formula for Shakespeare, I invariably find only this: he conceived the type of Caesar . . . After glancing at my *Zarathustra,* I pace to and fro in my room for a half hour, unable to control an unbearable fit of sobbing. I know of no more heartrending reading than Shakespeare: what he must have suffered to be so much in need of playing the clown!" Thus Nietzsche perverted his Socratic vocation into Wagnerian pathos. His terrible comedy was inflated to melodrama, and so was robbed of its proper triumph. The ironic malignity became a wail; the consuming laughter of the faun quavered into hysteria. The satyr was deprived of his prey as he never was in the Socratic comedy, where the dialectic relentlessly closed in upon its victims. Nietzsche the faun, the satyr, was a prey to his own barbarous comedy; he perished, masochistically, under his suffering as clown. He was defeated in his *agon.*

In the Socratic comedy the faun also underwent the discipline of suffering, was forced to drop the satyric mask and reveal the idiotic features of the clown. But the folly and impotence of the clown here proved to be a devouring wisdom, an illumination so brilliant that it daemonically ravaged the sophistications of Athens, the hypocrisies and evasions Socrates was always inspecting. The Socratic innocence was always arriving at intimations, if not at irresistible discovery. Innocence was revelation. Thus, when the Socratic comedy came to its close, the clown reassumed in triumph the mask of the tempter, the flickering smile of the ironist. Socrates was both clown and faun; scapegoat, saint, and satyr. For Nietzsche, intoxicated with Dionysiac madness, Socrates was the archetypal non-

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mystic, the symbol of decadent rationalism. He forgot that the Socratic comedy was not merely a dialectic, an intellectual skepticism and dissembling; it was also a daemonic affirmation with its own "signs." The Socratic mystery was finally the mystery of all high comedy—the truth, or intimations of truth, issuing from mockery. But in the Socratic comedy the mocker was disciplined along with his victims; not disciplined by his victim but by the severities of his own intimations and discoveries. The triumph of Socrates was continually the triumph of the humble. Socrates, *agonistes,* evoking a pathos all his own, was an offertory to the hard-mindedness and imperception of Athens. Yet the conquest was to Socrates, not to Athens. Here the comic irony was like that in the Old Norse epics when the fool made good his boast. It was a double irony: the scapegoat prevailed, but the skepticism of the fool, which was actually a revelation through simplicity and a touchstone of the truth, brought its own sense of humiliation along with its sense of mastery and vision. Therefore the outcome of this comedy was ambiguous—from abasement, ascendancy.

The *Phaedrus* is a high Socratic comedy. Veiling his head in uncertain reverence before the gods, Socrates the dissembler stands on the bank of the Ilissus and disburdens himself of his profane dithyramb against the irrational and beastly power of love (more inspired than the profanity of Benedick himself). Immediately a piety "sufficient for his needs" gives him a sign that he must recant, and he absolves his mockery by a palinode, an obscure myth of the soul in which more is to be understood than is spoken. Then he closes with a prayer that the gods give him beauty in the inward life. The scoffer is chastened. The performance in the *Crito* is the same. Socrates, who has spent his days ridiculing the unexamined premises of the Philistines, refuses to flee the scandalous wrath of the Athenians and abides the drinking of the hemlock because he hears within him, like the sound of a flute in the ears of a votary, the intimations of justice. But the face of the condemned Socrates is the face of the comic imp, with the thin smile and the devoted malice that made him appear, to the dissolute Alcibiades, like Marsyas the satyr. This clown with the features of Silenus transvalued the Greek sophistries by his dialectic, by his humilities and unexpressed commitments.

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To put it otherwise, the Socratic comedy is the Meredithian comedy introverted upon itself, a refining of comedy by pain and doubt. The comic faun, who preys upon folly and pretension in every disguise, is himself bit—abased by his own ignorance, stricken to piety by necessities he does not understand and insights he does not command. This is the deeper humanization of comedy that Meredith assigned to the humorist; usually the nineteenth-century comic stage was narrow and occupied by cultivated men and women whose laughter was more polite and impersonal than the Socratic laughter. The charity issuing from the disdain of the Meredithian faun is luminous—more detached, perhaps, than the inquisition of Socrates; but its province is the drawing room, not the human condition. The Meredithian comedy is not a civilizer upon ultimate occasions. It does not issue within the shadow of the tragic setting—upon the Areopagus, or in the cell of those condemned to drink the hemlock. In the Socratic drama the finely tempered malice of the faun is deflected into the pathos of the clown—or the saint—or into the grim resignations of tragedy. The Meredithian spirit cannot easily descend from his sunlit advantage into the humilities of prayer and sacrifice; he is not quite equal to the more severe necessities of civilization—not to the expiation of impiety or, possibly, the sudden resolution to kill Claudio who has ravaged, in his own exquisite and irresponsible way, the good name of Hero.

III

The cultivated society of *Much Ado,* like the cultivated society of Athens, is always breeding the tragic occasion. Messina is one of the giddy communities Meredith named semi-barbaric. It is not the light-hearted Illyria-world of *Twelfth Night,* which lies within those narrower "social" bounds of the Meredithian scene. There, in Illyria, the loves of Viola and Orsino, Sebastian and Olivia, are instant and lyric, and the designated comic prey is Malvolio the pretender, the bombastical, the allowed fool and puritan, the fantastically self-deceived. Maria is the faun whose license is to gull this cross-gartered, yellow-stockinged pomposity into a nayword. The running-down of Olivia's steward is an honorable sport if one accepts social ranks as pre-ordained and hallowed. Malvolio's offense is unforgivable, the ambition to behave as if he did not belong within the caste of stewards.

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In *Twelfth Night* we tolerate the follies of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, as we cannot tolerate the ambitions of Malvolio; Sir Andrew is not the legitimate prey of the comic destroyer because he is a gentleman and consequently has his privilege of idiocy. In this particular Meredithian game, one may descend but may not ascend (Meredith's own comic prey—Sir Willoughby Patterne, the largest beast Meredith ever brought down—is no Sir Andrew but instead a Malvolio by nature if not by caste). As Meredithian imp, therefore, Maria can be as ruthless as she will in her chastisement. The resonant Meredithian triumph is Olivia's final judgment upon Malvolio: "Alas, poor fool, how have they baffled thee!" (Sir Willoughby Patterne is as helpless.) Maria herself, malign and watchful, is unaffected by the bafflement of Malvolio; she is exempt from pathos or—what is unthinkable in this lyric world of Illyria—tragedy. The field of Shakespeare's third smiling comedy, *As You Like It,* is so generous and distant that we can hardly determine the operation of society upon Orlando and Rosalind; the half-pastoral world of the Forest of Arden is an entirely theatrical illusion.

The society of Messina, as Mr. James Smith has lately argued in *Scrutiny,* is a compact of Philistines in which self-interest and sentimentality have somewhat the proportions of a nineteenth-century respectability. It is a disagreeable society, as irresponsible and prim as the Vienna of *Measure for Measure.* The thronging delicate desires with which Claudio says he loves Hero do not have the lyrical urgent tone of the Renaissance like the affections of Orsino and Olivia, Orlando and Rosalind. Instead there is the atmosphere of bourgeois propriety and contrivance about Claudio's suit:

> *But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts*
> *Have left their places vacant, in their rooms*
> *Come thronging soft and delicate desires,*
> *All prompting me how fair young Hero is,*
> *Say I lik'd her ere I went to wars.*

Claudio simpers. It is easy for him to be directed which is the lady he must seize upon, or not seize upon. The arrangements for Hero made by old Leonato and Antonio are hardly acceptable even in perfunctory Messina—their care for appearance, their patching grief

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with proverbs, their eye for opportunity and decency. The comedy is frequently chilly and limited to the unconscious irony of Claudio's exclamation when he publicly shames Hero: "O, what men dare do! What men may do! What men daily do, not knowing what they do!" In frivolous Messina the comic triumph is often simply the opportunity to abuse weakness, as when Claudio contemptuously fears that two old men, the injured and feeble Leonato and Antonio, may, without their teeth, snap off his nose.

This philistine and hollow respectability, with its sentimentalism, may be expected to provoke insurgence, if not a destructive Nietzschean comedy. And in fact Messina has produced its own immoralist; not in the trim and callow Claudio but in the bastard Don John, who is a sort of alien Negation, a frank will to power. His responses are Nietzschean rather than Machiavellian: "Though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking." The comedy does not complete this Nietzschean transvaluation of respectability into the "unmasking of Christian morality." Nevertheless the nihilism of Don John is always there in the background—sometimes to be felt as a Mephistophelian mischief, an unconditioned violence. Don John, like Iago, is the tempter. This inherent Nietzschean dialectic in the play is left unresolved, for at the end Benedick persuades Messina not to think of Don John until tomorrow and promises to devise brave punishments for him. It is curious that the discipline of Don John should be left to the undisciplined Benedick, since in this effete society he and Beatrice share the bastard's high animal spirit—and they, like him, are alien from the gross proprieties of the city, which are maintained as a kind of reference for the comedy. The local respectabilities are always being threatened by Beatrice and Benedick as well as by the mischiefs of Don John and Borachio; the thoroughly conceived dishonoring of Hero is followed hard by the challenge to Claudio, a challenge obviously awkward and discomforting to an easygoing, evasive society. These violences are the unexpected crashes of the outer world, the world beyond the comic enclosure; there are similar reverberations within *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well That Ends Well*. They are the crashes not often heard on the Meredithian scene. The outer world also crashed in upon the end of the

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Socratic comedy, for beneath the giddiness of Athens were suppressed violences: the Melians had been butchered, and the Thirty had shed domestic blood, and the gods were held in precarious reverence.

The comic reduction of Messina is not, however, committed to the hands of the Nietzschean Don John but to the Meredithian fauns Benedick and Beatrice with their impious glee in preying upon affectation; it is like the robust, disorderly jibing of Mercutio. But the fauns become clowns—they suffer metamorphosis into a Socratic phase. Thus the Meredithian triumph is also a humanization. As scapegoats and fools these comic spirits prove themselves, like Socrates, adequate to the tragic occasion, and the comic catharsis is performed not entirely by their luminous impudence but also by humility, their recognition of the good through experience of evil and uncertainty. The fauns are victimized by their own integrity and innocence; yet their own folly becomes a daemonic wisdom against which we can calculate the hypocrisies and indecencies of Messina.

When the comedy opens, Beatrice and Benedick are sustaining their integrity against the conventionality and emptiness of Messina, and its mechanical responses, by assuming the mask of the dissembler, the ironist, whose negation is not the immoralism of Don John but the detachment and watchfulness of the comic satyr. Their detachment is already a little ambiguous—they already have been allowed the immunity extended to the fool. They have arrived at a relationship that excludes others; they keep up their merry war in which they intuit but deny the identity of their interests. They court vituperation because it relieves the tensions strung high by the sophistications of their society. In this saturnalia (Don Pedro is Lord of Misrule) Beatrice and Benedick have put on motley—and communication with the fool is at the primitive level of vituperation. They certainly will not yield themselves at all to the conveniences of Leonato and Antonio, or Don Pedro either. Beatrice is able to evade even the evasive Don Pedro, whose formal and polite investigations she promptly and courteously checks: "Your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your Grace, pardon me; I was born to speak all mirth and no matter." This is the mask of the jester by which she earns her inviolability. Benedick does not wear this mask so easily. He is said not to be able to maintain his part—that of the "obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty"—except by the force of his will. He and

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Beatrice are dissemblers who do not know clearly what their commitments may be, although they are aware of the need for commitments. Their insolence to each other is exploratory and fully reckoned. Beatrice thanks God for her cold blood, and Benedick protests to her "I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for, truly, I love none." The ironist is the heretic.

By assuming the satyric mask Benedick and Beatrice are playing the role of boaster or *alazon* as well as the role of mocker. Their independence is, as Nietzsche would say, a privilege of the strong—and, in circumspect Messina, a transgression of the sentimental code. They have unwittingly been forced into a comic *hubris*, a heterodoxy, a pretension that they can occupy only with increasing difficulty. In the Forest of Arden, Rosalind escaped this peril because she never denied that she was woman and that her disguise was one of the hard uses of adversity. These Socratic dissemblers have too arrogantly exempted themselves from the herd-morality. Beatrice is certain that she will not run mad till a hot January; Adam's sons are her brethren, and she will not match her kindred; besides, she can see a church by daylight. Benedick is more presumptuous: Love will never make an oyster of him; "he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace." With the irony of Meredithian tactics, he asks whether he shall never see a bachelor of threescore again. Of course the assumption of the role of *alazon* is at least in part an affectation; we know that before the play opens there has already been a passage or two of hearts between them. The dilemma, however, remains: the comic fauns have been betrayed into posing as boasters—the Philistines in Messina would say as destroyers, nihilists. They have permitted themselves a single but unmistakable Nietzschean gesture.

Hence the full transformation, the completed metamorphosis, from *eiron* to clown, an entirely Socratic reversal occurring with the recognition or "discovery" that humbles the comic spirit itself and causes the dissembler to drop his mask. He no longer *plays* the fool. He *is* the fool. Socrates the heretic often suffered a revelation that compelled him to abandon his profession of ignorance or skepticism and speak by an affirmative myth as of something known but not

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wholly utterable. This metamorphosis is the *reductio ad absurdum* of heresy, not unlike the tragic learning through suffering. In the Socratic drama this recognition occurs before his death; the skeptic must at last decide concerning the immortality of the soul. After the customary beliefs have been reviewed, he is goaded into accepting an ultimate challenge in which his own soul is the stake of the argument. In this extremity, and with a hesitating confidence in human reason, he commits himself to the dim Orphic myth of immortality. The tempter has attained his illumination; the satyr's mask has fallen. But the comedy is not done. Socrates' last words are equivocal—a tribute to a minor deity, the god of physicians: "Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius. Will you remember to pay the debt?" Socrates paying a cock to Asclepius! This is either expiation, or the final tender irony of the faun. We shall never know which.

The satiric mask falls quickly from Beatrice and Benedick. When the situation in Messina hangs between farce and tragedy—between the devices of Don Pedro as Lord of Misrule, and the devices of Don John as immoralist—we discover in Benedick the same wasted pity of which Mercutio, that other blasphemer, is capable. "Alas, poor hurt fowl!" remarks Benedick when he supposes that Claudio has been robbed of Hero by Don Pedro's wooing. "Now will he creep into sedges." The eavesdropping in Leonato's orchard, when by prearrangement Benedick and Beatrice overhear themselves accused of inhumanity, begins the discipline of suffering, the chastising of these comic fauns, whose virtue, according to the Socratic paradox, is a reflex of their innocence and whose humiliation is a warrant of their integrity. The triumph of comedy over farce, and over the Nietzschean dialectic, is the sudden realization of Benedick, then of Beatrice, "I must not seem proud. Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending." So they are reduced, and will be horribly in love; the world must be peopled. Benedick is not as he has been: "When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married." And Beatrice will tame her wild heart to Benedick's loving hand. The fauns are as pitiful and as helpless as Malvolio—"Alas, poor fool, how have they baffled thee!"

In one of his confessional moments Wordsworth (who was no comic faun) explained "A deep distress hath humanized my soul." This is the humanization that can occur in comedy, by a comic pathos.

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The satyr is transformed to the scapegoat, and is sacrificed as oblation and satisfaction to the disingenuousness of Messina. The faun will, of course, recover, and re-assume the mask and once more dissemble. But the dissembling will be more ambiguous, more vulnerable. After such recognitions a cock is paid to Asclepius, and Benedick claims that he takes Beatrice but for pity. The Meredithian spirits are emancipated by their new wisdom. They will, like Socrates, continue to speak the worst and act the best, but they cannot maintain their alienation as ironists. In the Socratic comedy the dissembler finds that he is a man, a political animal even in corrupt Athens; the satyr is willing to drink the hemlock; he puts aside Crito's offer to rescue him with a renewed assurance that the judgment of the citizens is inexplicably the will of God and that nothing more can be said. In *Much Ado* the humanization of the fauns comes not with the recognition of their responsibilities to themselves amid the evasions of Messina, but with their involvement in these affairs, their duty to Hero and to justice. Their conversion happens beneath the tragic pressures of the ceremony that looks not like a wedding, when Claudio cries out upon Hero. Beatrice, already humbled to the confession "I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest," at once stuns Benedick with the command that he revenge Hero and kill Claudio. The fauns are no longer disengaged from their society. The mockers have become simpletons, and the situation is rescued from the immoralism of Don John. As simpletons, Beatrice and Benedick cannot now claim even the exemption of the fool.

That Claudio is not killed does not matter. The dissemblers have performed their oblation to Messina, have made an affirmation more to be expected upon the tragic scene. Civilization, said Matthew Arnold, is the humanization of man in society. The exulting smile of the Meredithian faun is not civilizing in this sense because it is the smile of detachment, the smile of *Twelfth Night,* the springing delight and hard pursuit. Aristotle implied that tragedy is a political art. Comedy is also political. Henceforth Beatrice and Benedick laugh, but their cynicism is provably—not conjecturally, as it was earlier—a mere adjustment to the society of Messina, with which they have entered into a new compact. They, too, have assumed their roles in the human comedy, but upon their own terms of integrity. They have surrendered their immunity. In his advice to Don Pedro, Ben-

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edick says less than he knows: "Prince, thou art sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife. There is no staff more reverend than one tipp'd with horn." The laughter is honorable because it issues under the stroke of humility: "In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it, for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion." So Benedick puts aside the Prince; so Socrates put aside Crito. The Philistine values of Messina have been transvalued not by the destroyer but by the faun who has been, for a moment, transfigured into the Revolutionary Simpleton. Nietzsche was right, after all, that our deepest insights will appear as follies. But he was wrong in adding that they may also appear as crimes.

IV

The fool in Dostoevsky—the idiot—may occupy an extremity of crime and anguish that is almost Nietzschean. Or the Fool in *Lear* may occupy for a while the Socratic extreme, with its insights beyond the confusions of the world. Their suffering is a vocation, like Kafka's; it is not a discipline. Neither has the truly comic advantage of the Meredithian faun, the final exemption from pain after his recognition. This advantage, which Beatrice and Benedick enjoy, is the advantage of comedy as a political art. We have lately accepted the clown as a religious impersonator—the fool of God, the visionary Innocent like Friar Juniper or St. Francis himself. The wrestlers with Christ have been presented as simpletons: Bloy, Rouault, Rimbaud, Kafka, Dostoevsky, and all the possessed whose helplessness before the world is wisdom before God. We have forgotten that the fool, the clown, does not necessarily wrestle with God or seek a faith; he is the original human comedy, the primal human innocence. The philosophic clown Socrates possessed a wisdom radically secular: "if you ask me what kind of wisdom, I reply, such wisdom as is attainable by man." He did not deny the gods, but knew that they are distant. The comic spirit is most solicitous in its secular observations, in its perspective upon the human condition; in the discovery, shall we say, by the *eiron* that he himself, like the other men in Messina, is a giddy thing.

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CROSS-COUNTRY

ST. PAUL, HOME OF THE SAINTS

> St. Paul is located at 45 degrees north latitude, about halfway between the equator and the north pole, or a little more than 6,000 miles from either. Its longitude is about 93 degrees west. Accordingly, St. Paul is also very nearly midway between the Prime Meridian and the International Date Line, and enjoys a very central position.—*St. Paul: Location-Development-Opportunities,* by F. C. Miller, Ph.D.

The author of the work cited would have wished it that way, I think, and this account would be better if Minneapolis, the sister city, were not mentioned at all or designated only by chaste asterisks. In Dr. Miller's pages the word Minneapolis (and a very silly word it is) is not to be seen save as it appears of necessity in the names of railroads whose main objective presumably was to come to St. Paul. For instance, in establishing the exact whereabouts of the University of Minnesota (not the College of Agriculture which *is* in St. Paul), Dr. Miller solves the problem very nicely by saying it "is within easy access."

Today this is one of the debatable points in Miller. If you look at a map, the two cities appear to be joined as one, but if you live here you know this to be an illusion. The yellow streetcars discourage traveling from one city to the other. They are an expensive public service (reputedly in the hands of Eastern interests), take forever to arrive anywhere (recently one got lost going to Minneapolis), hide away in their barns at dusk, and there are no pullman accommodations to be had for the trip. An express bus, also a tool of the interests, stops running at 8 P.M., but it is almost as elusive during the daytime and really acts as a teaser to make commuters content with the comparative stability and slow death of the rails. Even by private auto the trip from St. Paul to Minneapolis is long and winding, fraught

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with stops, starts, portages, and unless a native, one should take a guide. The fare by taxi is said to be $3.50. Some expected the invention of the aeroplane, later the helicopter, to solve the transportation problem, to bring us together in other ways too, but it never worked out.

The twin cities are anything but two of a kind. Only a stranger would reckon them so. To describe one city to its satisfaction is to malign the other. Minneapolis is still the Zenith of Sinclair Lewis, and proud of it. St. Paul, by comparison, is in part what a writer for the *Saturday Evening Post* called it, "slow and poky, and there are few extroverts around to disturb the calm." The last part is unfortunately too good to be true, but as might be expected the Chamber of Commerce braves fought the appraisal in bitter letters to the editor.

Both cities are doomed by climate and circumstance not to realize the bright promise of their beginnings. St. Paul lives in retirement and grows older gracefully. Minneapolis will very likely collapse all at once, like a noisy salesman from a heart attack. Doubtless St. Paul, the smaller twin (now), is more conscious of the war between the cities, having lost.

Minneapolis can assume a galling indifference to the struggle and get away with it, but the old meanness still crops out. On a streetcar in Minneapolis recently, I heard a passenger say as a colored woman rose to get off: "Look at that poor girl coming back from St. Paul," a reference to St. Paul's alleged dinginess and still no tribute to her industry. However, we find ways to get back. At Lexington Park, home of the St. Paul baseball club, the Saints, a good thing to say when a Minneapolis Miller flubs the ball a few feet is: "That woulda been a home run at Nicollet," a dig at Minneapolis' cracker-box ball park. (Alas, they are building a new one that will be bigger than ours!) When I first came to St. Paul I heard the audience at a neighborhood theater boo when a selected short of the Minneapolis Aquatennial flashed on the screen. (I was puzzled then, but now I boo with them: I just can't get enough of this heady chauvinism.)

II

Minneapolis is a city on a plain. St. Paul rises from the river in a series of hills and valleys. On this Dr. Miller comments: "Some

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enthusiastic geographers have seriously proposed the substitution of the name of Terrace City." However, between Louis Galtier, the missionary priest who named the city after the disciple to whom his log chapel was dedicated, resenting the earlier Pig's Eye (after the proprietor of a small saloon), and Archbishop Ireland who built the Cathedral of St. Paul, the enthusiastic geographers have gotten nowhere with their proposal. The city remains Christian in name as it does Catholic in fact. Under the head of separation of church and state, it should be mentioned that the St. Paul clergy get passes to Lexington Park. On the other hand, Minneapolis has an FEPC law, but St. Paul, with half the city employees, has twice as many Negroes on the payroll.

The magnificent cathedral at the neck of Summit Avenue dominates the city and surrounding country. Warned by a succession of engineers that the lip of the hill would never support his dream, Archbishop Ireland insisted upon the site and searched until he found one who would agree with him. If he had not discovered his authority, it is probable, like a king, he would have created an acceptable one. And still he was a man of simple tastes, living in a cottage himself, and with Cardinal Gibbons an early defender of the Rights (and Knights) of Labor. He remains, historically, one of the few great American prelates to emerge from continuously poor crops. He was a strong temperance advocate who would have no part, however, in prohibition. He was an ultra-nationalist, too, who appears to have been absolutely sincere about it, and so it seems tolerable in retrospect, but the effects are still to be seen in the fact that St. Paul's two Catholic high schools for boys are both military academies. The majority of young Catholics go to the public schools of necessity (the military academies have scholastic and tuition requirements which serve as a brake to attendance). The present archbishop, however, is planning to build another high school. (St. Paul has had good luck with its archbishops. The present one is exceptional, no cold executive, a New Englander like the one before him, and he is said to think nothing of making the journey to Minneapolis by streetcar and to need protection from the various loonies who seek him out, finding no audience lower down.)

Dr. Miller writes: "What Man has done in St. Paul is scarcely less impressive than what Nature did in the dim past, since the site

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of St. Paul was raised above the ancient sea." No man has done more for St. Paul than James Jerome Hill, the empire builder. Here we sing of Jim—not Joe—Hill. His pages in the D.A.B. at the public library are thumbed and annotated—one feels that countless school children, and elders too, have gone to them seeking inspiration and guidance. His deeds and buildings and railroads live after him. (I had meant to do some exhaustive research on Mr. Hill, but the public library's copy of Josephson's *The Robber Barons,* in which Mr. Hill figures prominently, was in use, and the Hill Reference Library, which he endowed, does not list the book.) Mr. Hill was not a Catholic, but he paid for the St. Paul Seminary and contributed much to the building of the Cathedral—doubtless remembering that Archbishop Ireland had provided the immigrant settlers who in turn provided the revenue for Mr. Hill's railroads to the coast. Mr. Hill's grandson, serving his seventh term as a state representative, is said to be a small chip off the old block; it is a little late in the day, even here, to try to be more. The Hill mansion squats in stony gloom across from the Cathedral, is now owned by the Church (a gift), is used for educational purposes.

III

I have met only one native who knew F. Scott Fitzgerald here and when—and in his words: "He was a quiet neighborhood boy; you know he moved away." My informant was present at the party described in the story, "The Camel's Back," which Fitzgerald explains was written "with the express purpose of buying a platinum and diamond wrist watch which cost six hundred dollars." I thought my informant a little old to have known Fitzgerald as a contemporary until I realized he was about the vintage to have been one of the sad young men, and Fitzgerald himself, if living, would seem a little old to have known himself.

Some of the stories of the period are set in St. Paul, usually with no indication, sometimes under a thin disguise for no apparent reason. (There is much to be said for keeping one's friends and hometown out of it, but Fitzgerald did the kind of job that would only hold up in court.) Toledo in "The Camel's Back," not that it matters, is actually St. Paul. It would be hard to think of Toledo at all if it were not in the same baseball league with St. Paul, which, I submit, is how

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Fitzgerald managed to think of it. In his Notebooks, what there is of them in *The Crack Up,* Summit Avenue, "our show street," becomes "Crest Avenue" and "A Museum of American Architectural Failures," which it certainly is, and James J. Hill, "our great man," goes as "R. R. Comerford," and Henry Hastings Sibley, "our first governor," as "Chelsea Arbuthnot." Fitzgerald notes somewhat despondently: "Arbuthnot was the first governor—and almost the last of Anglo-Saxon blood."

"The Ice Palace" is a story that still says something about St. Paul and more about Minnesota. Every year the local businessmen get together and put on a winter carnival with the usual floats and ceremonies. It happens in February, lasts ten days during which time we live merrily under a monarchy—this year under King Boreas XII who opened his reign with these words: "Let us unloose untapped laughter and make merry with good, clean fun. Yea, verily, let joy be unconfined." In private life the king works in a bank and the queen is a stenographer. A palace is erected from blocks of ice, and thereby hangs Fitzgerald's tale. In his time the palace was large enough for the principal character in the story to lose herself in, but this year (things are tough all over for royalty) it was more like a two-car garage. (I hate to think what might have happened to Summit Avenue itself if the Church hadn't discovered that the big houses make very good convents—more than ever the district deserves the name "Vatican City.")

In this story Harry Bellamy, the local boy, is a Yale man ("scratch a Yale man with both hands and you'll be lucky to find a coast-guard"), and like another Yale man, Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby,* he fears for the future of the white race. Tom says: "Have you read *The Rise of the Colored Empires* by this man Goddard? . . . Well, it's a fine book, and everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved." And Harry says (of the half-submerged "damn Southerners"): "They're sort of—sort of degenerates—not at all like the old Southerners. They've lived so long down there with all the colored people that they've gotten lazy and shiftless."

"Can you feel the pep in the air?" Harry asks, but Sally Carrol Happer, who comes from the South, hates to think of there being

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snow on her grave and thinks some bitter thoughts about the society she finds in Minnesota, with Fitzgerald obviously on her side: ". . . the men seemed to do most of the talking while the girls sat in a haughty and expensive aloofness. . . . They just fade out when you look at them. They're glorified domestics. Men are the center of every mixed group." It isn't that way now, and even then it must have been truer of Minnesota than of St. Paul and/or the Irish.

Obviously, given his name and antecedents, Fitzgerald longed to have been born where there was a history not just of settlers and Indians. "France was a land, England was a people, but America, having about it still that quality of the idea, was harder to utter—it was the graves at Shiloh and the tired, drawn, nervous faces of its great men, and the country boys dying in the Argonne for a phrase that was empty before their bodies withered. It was a willingness of the heart." In one story he says, "Warren was nineteen and rather pitying with those of his friends who hadn't gone East to college." If Fitzgerald himself was above "pitying" he was still too aware of going to Princeton, coming home for the holidays, a good part of the going because then he was "from" *somewhere,* so that one feels he was consciously fortunate—it's almost as though he just missed being sent to the state university. Where he lived on Summit Avenue was and is on the fringe—a building of the most impressive stone possible, but an apartment building nonetheless. Here, after running a half mile at its best, Summit Avenue seems to pause and relax before it begins again.

The Scandinavians who abound in Minnesota are described as "righteous, narrow, and cheerless, without infinite possibilities for great sorrow or joy." This, one feels, is a real complaint with Fitzgerald, and the situation remains critical today. Minnesota has still another Swedish governor, another honest man, another reformer. In the last election, alone among cities, St. Paul voted against him —not for sinful reasons entirely, but more out of boredom. St. Paul is now cleaner than Minneapolis, though once the haven of high-ranking public enemies who showed their gratitude by performing their duties elsewhere. Clean and dismal. It is impossible for an exiled horse-player to find a bookie, things have gone that far. The voice of the slot machine is no longer heard in the land. There is much betting, however, on football games—a very low-church form

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of gambling. Whenever more money is sought through taxation, the legislators think of liquor and cigarettes. (Recently, when they moved to slap another tax on these items, someone started up a terrible row by suggesting that coffee be taxed instead. Scandinavian coffee-drinkers were quickly interviewed by the papers and what they had to say made very sad reading indeed.)

Catholics predominate in St. Paul, Lutherans come next (they lead in Minneapolis), and the kind of hot-rod evangelism one sees down South is also popular, but the accepted religion is Athleticism. "Why, the best athletes in the world come from these States around here," Harry Bellamy says. "This is a man's country, I tell you. Look at John J. Fishburn!"—alias J. J. Comerford. The name most invoked is that of Bernie Bierman, coach-genius of the University football team, "the Golden Gophers." Mr. Bierman himself is known as "the Grey Eagle." There is a Bernie Bierman Hour on the radio during which Saturday's game is prayed over and incense offered to the days when Minnesota was great. Six of the seven Twin City stations carried every home game last year (the backsliding station played popular records, but one of the others re-broadcasted the game in the evening). It is a rare household that isn't headed by a hunter. Fly-tying is taught at an academy of art. The book page of the Sunday *Pioneer Press,* since the abdication of James Gray who used to do a daily review too, has been cut to one AP review, but the doings of duck and deer are watched closely, and there is a considerable body of criticism on these subjects. A *cause celebre* concerns the pheasant and the fish. South Dakota has revoked hunting privileges for Minnesotans, and Minnesota threatens to retaliate by denying fishing licenses to South Dakotans. Both sides fear an "incident" in the cold war. Only one man is wise enough to arbitrate—Cedric Adams, the gifted columnist and newscaster, the friend of Arthur Godfrey and Bennett Cerf—but even he, like the Pope, is not trusted in all quarters. Meanwhile both sides claim to have the bomb.

IV

In the war to come between New York and Chicago, in which there should be a P.R. Brigade, it is likely St. Paul would join whichever side Minneapolis didn't. This is not a certainty, of course, and one should not, as I do not, reckon entirely without the forces

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working for unity. Much might depend on what Boston did, with which St. Paul has faint affinities. ("When Boston was married to the locomotive, their first child was St. Paul, their second Portland."—Anon.) And if Minneapolis were attacked by Chicago, for plagiarism, say, it is safe to predict that St. Paul, seeing here a blow against Minnesota herself (*"L'Etoile du Nord über Alles"*) would close ranks with the old enemy.

It is true that this rivalry does not exist among the leisure classes of either city, at least not to the extent I've pictured it, but I have not spoken of this minority insulated as they are from the common concerns, from the simple loyalties and fears which they nevertheless arouse and prey upon as the need arises to market, as the local product, their beer, their war, their candidacy. They are welcome to the larger view and other refinements. Meanwhile, by way of envoi, I say with one citizen who wrote to the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*—"The only thing that marred my enjoyment of the recent carnival was the Minneapolis announcer on WTCN who described the last portion of the big Saturday parade as it marched through the (St. Paul) Auditorium. Twice during his description of the beauty and magnificence of the lovely girls and floats he said: 'Right here in the Minneapolis Auditorium.' If he had only said it once we might have excused it as a slip."

J. F. Powers

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Sidney Hook

REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DICTATORSHIP AND WAR

The idea of The International Day of Resistance to Dictatorship and War, held in Paris on April 30, 1949, was suggested to David Rousset, its chief initiator, by the meeting conducted at Freedom House in New York City on March 26, by Americans for Intellectual Freedom.

The project was supported by the Executive Committee of the *Rassemblement Democratique Revolutionnaire* and by the editorial staff of the daily newspaper *Franc-Tireur* in whose joint name invitations were issued.

The *R.D.R.* is a group of left-wing writers, critics, and artists—the most notable of whom is Jean-Paul Sartre—whose political sentiments range from near-Communist to democratic socialist. It conceives its mission as a regrouping and integration of "left" forces in French life. For practical purposes, it defines the left as almost all elements who regard De Gaulle rather than the Communist Party as the main enemy of freedom and socialism in France. The Communist Party of France is regarded by the *R.D.R.* as a genuine working class party with bureaucratic deformations, too subservient to the Kremlin, but capable, together with the S.P., of being influenced by genuinely revolutionary socialist ideas. The *R.D.R.* is devoid of any mass influence but has a strong following among the footloose Paris intelligentsia who are excited by ideological novelties but are politically very immature. Because of the prestige of ideas and literary personalities in French culture, the *R.D.R.* has considerable snob appeal.

The *Franc-Tireur,* one of whose editors is Rousset, until recently followed the Communist Party line rather faithfully but with greater sensationalism and demagogy. As a result of a schism with the Party stalwarts, and a visit by Rousset and Altman, its chief editor, to the United States, where they discovered that the U.S. was neither decadent nor neo-Fascist, that Negroes are not lynched on every street corner, and that a strong trade-union movement was leading the struggle for progressive social legislation, the *Franc-Tireur* dropped its exclusively anti-

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American line. Now, without ceasing to denounce American foreign policy, it also ventures to ask rhetorical questions about the existence of democracy in the Soviet Union. Recently it has had several sharp exchanges with *l'Humanité*. So far it has kept its 300,000 readers who only a few months ago were hardly distinguishable from the readers of *l'Humanité*. The editors are convinced that their reading public must be spoon-fed with mild injections of anti-Stalinist criticism until they build up a tolerance to stronger doses. Since the Communist Party has already denounced them as agents of American imperialism, they lean over backward to appear as vigorous critics of American policy, particularly the Atlantic Pact. They no longer criticize the Marshall Plan.

The sponsors of the International Day set themselves a very ambitious task—nothing more than the preparation of a World Congress Against Dictatorship and War to be held in Europe next fall. The only conditions for participation in the preparatory April 30th meeting were (1) recognition that the struggle for freedom against all forms of totalitarianism is bound up with the struggle for peace, and (2) acceptance of *freedom of inquiry* for all participants to present solutions to make this struggle effective. No one was to be choked with a predetermined party-line.

If allowance is made for the shortness of time, the slender resources, and the peculiar character of the initiating committee—which although at odds with the Stalinists often talks like them to the discomfiture of some socialist groups—a rather large but *far from representative* group of participants gathered in Paris. There were delegates from England, United States, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Western Germany, and democratic Spain. Among the delegates were Silone, Carlo Levi, Borkenau, Tarnov, Brockway, De Kadt, the English geneticist, Darlington, Bourdet, Pivert. Expressions of support were received from Julian Huxley, Crossman, Dos Passos, Sinclair, and many others. The bulk of the delegates consisted of Frenchmen and an extraordinary number of spokesmen for colonial peoples. The most important organizations officially represented were the Socialist Party of the Seine, the autonomous unions, and the Paris region of the *Force Ouvrière*. There were a baker's dozen of other French organizations, represented either officially or by self-delegated individuals, on the order of the *Mouvement Socialiste des Etats-Unis d'Europe* and the *Ligue Internationale contre le Racisme et l'Antisemitisme*.

What gave the International Day importance was that it followed hard on the heels of the Congress of World Partisans for Peace—a Cominform affair from start to finish. That there were two peace meetings

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weakened the force of the first and revealed more clearly its Communist character. The placarding of the walls of Paris with posters advertising the International Day undoubtedly had some limited educational effect.

Nonetheless the initiators of the Day were careful *not* to call it a counter-demonstration to the Stalinist meeting, among other reasons for fear of antagonizing a considerable number of persons who although not sufficiently sympathetic to the Communist Party to accept the role of public fellow-travelers are not sufficiently courageous to appear in open opposition to it.

The cultural and political climate of opinion in France until recently has been such that it required more courage in non-Communist left circles to be openly critical of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union than is required for an individual to become a Communist Party fellow-traveler in the U.S. Last summer I had already observed this obsessive fear among avowed non-Communists in France, particularly in French literary and intellectual circles, to challenge in any fundamental way the Soviet myth. Ignorance of conditions in the Soviet Union was matched only by ignorance of conditions in the United States, about which the Communists and their fellow-travelers had sold them a misleading bill of goods unwittingly helped by American novels of social criticism like those of Steinbeck, Lewis and Wright. (The French read these books as sober sociological reports about the current state of American culture.) The Communist Party was regarded not as the French fifth column of the Kremlin, something which the Party itself hardly troubles to conceal, but as an organization of brothers in the class war against capitalism—erring only in impatience and unnecessary dogmatism. This is still the predominant spirit among the so-called left, and raises several problems I shall discuss later.

It is this mood which explains the astonishing fact that the initiators of the International Day offered a place on their program to official representatives of the Communist Partisans for Peace—which might have been tactically legitimate under certain circumstances—but refused to invite men like Koestler, Burnham, and Raymond Aron, who whatever else may be said of them, towered intellectually above most of the other participants present, particularly the French. Raymond Aron, e.g., former resistance leader, sympathizer but not a member of De Gaulle's *R.P.F.*, to which he is perceptibly cooling, more clearly fulfilled the conditions of participation laid down by the organizing group—opposition to war and dictatorship, and willingness to consider all proposals to prevent both—than the Stalinists to whom an invitation had been extended but who scorned it.

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II

The International Day consisted of two meetings—an afternoon meeting in the Grand Amphitheater of the Sorbonne, and an evening mass meeting at the Velodrome d'Hiver, the Madison Square Garden of Paris. The first was jammed full to the rafters, the second was attended by about 12,000. Both meetings revealed that the organizers were woefully inexperienced. They did not know how to space speakers, and when to conclude the meeting.

In the evening both organizers and the audience let themselves be intimidated by a handful of noisy anarchists and Trotskyists who had shrewdly appraised the extent to which pacifist sentiment was a disguise for moral irresoluteness. Seizing on the remarks of the innocent Karl Compton, who was as much at home in this environment as a Yankee in Tibet, they tried to snatch "the mike," and were pacified only when they were given the rostrum to denounce the organizers, delegates and the whole conception of the International Day. Some of the Americans seemed appalled by the interruptions, but the Frenchmen, and the French press generally, seemed to shrug it off as *"une affaire Parisienne."*

Incidentally, the anarchists and Trotskyists, who between them numbered no more than a hundred, had refused to participate in the organization of the Day. But they demanded the right to attack it despite the fact that their points of view had been amply presented at the Sorbonne meeting by speakers from the Congress of Peoples and other participating organizations. Perhaps the wildest speech of the day was made by a Trotskyist from Ceylon who was given the floor because he claimed he had come all the way from Ceylon to attend the meeting. It later turned out he had come to attend the Communist Congress of Partisans for World Peace at the Salle Pleyel but had been barred. Neither he nor his fellows tried to snatch the mike *there*. His main theme at the Sorbonne, as expressed in his concluding sentence, was: "The only way to insure peace is to turn the cold war against the Soviet Union into a civil war against the West!"

There would have been nothing objectionable in giving the psychopathic ward on the left a place on the program. After all, the International Day was a cross between a political fair and a political bedlam. But it was cowardice to yield to a show of force. Everyone knew, and none better than the anarchists and Trotskyists, that if they had attempted to disrupt a Communist meeting or a De Gaullist meeting they would have been carried out dead. That is why they carefully stayed away from the six day Communist talk fest at the Partisans

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Congress for Peace. But here was a chance too good to miss. It involved no risks.

III

With few exceptions the speeches were on an incredibly low political level—and I am not now referring to the line—in tone, expression, and content. Not since I was a boy thirty years ago listening to the soap-boxers in Madison Square have I heard such banalities and empty rhetoric. There was no attempt at serious analysis. No one answered anyone else. There was no discussion. This was as true at the Sorbonne as at the Velodrome. The statues of Descartes, Pascal and other eminent French men of thought looked down on the proceedings. If they had come to life I am sure they would never have been convinced that they were in France listening to Frenchmen. For whatever seems to be left of logic in Paris has apparently taken refuge in the subways with their clear and precise charts. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the "underground man" in Paris is one who believes that evidence and logic are still relevant in reaching responsible political positions.

If those who attended were actually representative of the non-Communist "left," it is testimony of the devastating effect of the war and Nazi occupation on its political education. It is hard to determine how representative the gathering was in political *feeling*. Certainly, its rhetoric did not square with the practices of either the Socialist Party or the non-Communist trade unions. As far as the audience is concerned it seemed to be composed mainly of pacifists—the kind of people who would turn out to hear Garry Davis—sprinkled with infantile revolutionary sectarians who in reality are Stalinists *manqué*.

But several things were clear. The prevailing mood, both among the speakers and audience, was as anti-American as it was anti-Soviet. The anti-Americanism, I gathered, was not new; the anti-Stalinism was. The effect was rather odd. In order to win the right to say a critical word—usually by indirection—about the Soviet Union, the speakers would attack even more vehemently and quite explicitly American imperialism. It was as if, fearful of being attacked by the Communists as American agents, they sought to ward off the criticism by showing that they could be as extreme and reckless as the Communists in their comments on the United States.

Most of the speakers were quite outspoken in their opposition to the Atlantic Pact, and pleaded for a neutrality between what they called the two blocs, as if the liberties of Western Europe were threatened equally by the Soviet Union and the United States. It was inter-

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esting to note that most of the Frenchmen who criticized the Atlantic Pact said very little or nothing against the Marshall Plan although last summer they had been very hostile to it. When I asked for an explanation of this one Frenchmen dryly remarked that they had all put on some weight as a result of it. More significant was the admission many were prepared to make in private but not in public that the Marshall Plan had saved France from the Communists and De Gaullists.

The criticisms of the Atlantic Pact were not made on the basis of an analysis of its specific provisions and of any realistic alternative but in terms of abstract formulas about expanding American capitalism. One got the impression that they believed that the Atlantic Pact was imposed upon the governments of Western Europe in the same way as Vishinsky set up a government in Rumania. In a statement read to the Sorbonne audience, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Wright drew an explicit equation between the terroristic annexations of the Soviet Union in the East and the Atlantic Pact in the West, condemning both "equally and for the same reason." In the case of Sartre reference to the Atlantic Pact was purely formal. He spoke substantially the same way a year ago, before there was an Atlantic Pact, about the Marshall Plan. And he held the same view even prior to the Marshall Plan. From the standpoint that the current cold war is nothing but an opposition between two forms of economy—capitalism and socialism—apparently no particular analysis of anything is necessary. Last summer when I asked one of the leading figures of Sartre's group in what specific ways the Marshall Plan threatened French economy, the only reply I received was the vulgar psychological *a priorism*: "Everyone knows that no nation helps another except out of economic self-interest." As if the self-interest of two groups cannot sometimes coincide!

This primitivism in economic and political matters is not surprising because it is based on ignorance of complex matters and a kind of exhibitionism by subtle men, too impatient to study something which they feel is alien to their "essence" but in relation to which they wish to take a brave "independent" stand. Primitivism in cultural matters, however, by people with developed sensibilities is something else again. Sartre's statement, developing the simple equation between Soviet and American culture, admits that the Soviet Union is a terroristic police state but then goes on to add "But neither is the United States a paradise of liberty." Since the United States is not a paradise of liberty —as if anyone, anywhere, at any time had even faintly suggested it was!—there is no difference between it and the cultural hell of the Soviet Union sufficiently important to justify engaging oneself in the

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common fight of all democratic elements to prevent the Iron Curtain from advancing West—*a fight that cannot be won without American help.*

I do not know what a "paradise of liberty" would be, and I suspect I would not enjoy many of its liberties if it were occupied by fanatical people with widely different tastes. But I grant that the Weimar Republic was no paradise of liberty. Neither was the Loyalist regime in Spain. Nor Czechoslovakia in 1938, Poland in 1939, Finland and Holland and Belgium in 1940. Will anyone, who wishes to breathe the air of a free culture, therefore strike an attitude of neutrality between what is short of paradise and the totalitarian Inferno which threatens to replace it? Were the unhappy occasion ever to arise I can imagine no more convenient premise for the Petainists of a Russian occupation than Sartre's foolish equation. I am confident he would be the first to repudiate it—if his erring brothers in the Communist Party let him live long enough.

No speaker at the sessions who opposed the Atlantic Pact made the legitimate distinction between the rearming of Western Europe, which is a highly debatable proposition even on the basis of military strategy, and its guarantee of protection to European countries that they could continue their program of social reconstruction; even, as in the case of England, the building of a socialist economy, without suffering the fate of Poland or Czechoslovakia. To be against the Atlantic Pact simply followed from their opposition to American imperialism which was just as bad—to the splinter and crackpot groups even worse—as the expansion of the Soviet terror state. As to the concrete meaning of American imperialism in the present historical conjuncture, no coherent or consistent account could be elicited. It was hard to separate opposition to chewing gum, Coca-Cola, the *Reader's Digest* (best selling periodical in France) from condemnation of segregation, the monopoly of the atom bomb, and the "colonialization" of Europe achieved by the Machiavellian device of sending bread and machinery to rebuild Europe.

De Kadt, member of the Dutch parliament, and the leading figure in the left-wing of the Dutch Labor Party, began his five-minute speech with a condemnation of Dutch policy in Indonesia. This brought tumultuous applause. But when he went on to explain in simple words why the Dutch workers firmly supported the Atlantic Pact, the audience—or what was left of it by the time he spoke—turned hostile. De Kadt remained unmoved. In the calm voice of a sober man speaking among drunkards—and by this time many in the audience seemed word-drunk as a result of the sloganized speeches, "If you want peace, prepare the revolution," "If you want bread, prepare the revolution"—De Kadt reminded them that if it were not for the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic

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Pact, they would not even have the freedom to sit in the Sorbonne and criticize American imperialism. This so infuriated some of his auditors that the Chair had to appeal to them to let the speaker finish.

At the Velodrome, Silone talked for almost an hour to an audience which seemed a little disappointed that he did not go beyond vague and commonplace generalities about a socialist Europe. He was followed by a French scientist, M. Perrin. Karl Compton, who through some misunderstanding appeared instead of his brother, Arthur Compton, then spoke about the history of atomic research, the race against Hitler's scientists, the considerations which led to its use in Hiroshima, and the prospects of peaceful applications of nuclear energy. After he finished, the fracas around the mike took place. Garry Davis, world citizen, got a big hand when he intervened to read a message the Communists had prevented him from reading at their Congress. Rousset then delivered a powerful speech, with the voice and manners of a mass orator, in which he skillfully sought to placate the political surrealists. He criticized the Atlantic Pact but carefully avoided making the same kind of equation between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. which Sartre and his friends had done. Politically, he is a man of quite a different kidney from Sartre.

The meeting dragged to a close with the reading of resolutions which were adopted by acclamation.

IV

To American liberals the most difficult thing to understand is the reluctance of the non-Communist left to speak out openly and with appropriate vigor against the regime of terror in the Soviet Union, its betrayal of every socialist ideal, and its foreign policy of annexation and subversion through fifth column specialists in national sabotage in other countries. This difficulty in assessing the situation is aggravated by the indiscriminate use of belligerent rhetoric against the United States despite the facts that French ideology and traditions are certainly closer to those of the U.S. than to those of the U.S.S.R., and that the foreign policy of the French government, which this section of French opinion prefers either to the regime of De Gaulle or the Communist Party, is in general agreement with that of the United States. These two points, although somewhat related, must be discussed differently.

Despite the myths and legends which sprang up after the liberation, there was not much of a resistance movement to the Nazis in France. In 1940 when the war seemed irretrievably lost, almost the entire population collaborated in some form or other with the Vichy government and passively accepted the occupation. The Resistance consisted of a

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handful around De Gaulle, the Jews, and after June 22, 1941, the Communists, who on orders from the Kremlin were able to acquire strategic posts, organize non-party groups under their command, and carry on an incessant propaganda which pictured the desperate defense of the Soviet Union against its erstwhile partner as a defense of France. After the liberation the Communists exploited their position of prestige very cleverly. Since from mid-1941 on, their opposition had been total, they could intimidate the vast majority which had adjusted itself at one time or another to what seemed to be the irrevocable decisions of history. They were aided in this by the natural tendency of many Frenchmen to extenuate and reinterpret their behavior under the Vichy regime in order to escape punitive measures, and by the almost universally shared hope that the Soviet Union would alter its policy as a result of the common struggle against Hitlerism from which it had suffered so much. Since the most overtly reactionary and conservative groups in France had been most conspicuously identified with Vichy, there was little opposition to those aspects of the domestic program of the Communists, even by the De Gaullists, which sought to strip reactionaries of the right of their power.

The eloquent and, if properly construed, damning fact that the Soviet Union and the Communists everywhere had actively collaborated with the Nazis, that the French Communists had sabotaged the war effort until Hitler took the initiative against Stalin, that the French Communists were in reality Soviet Maquis not French patriots, could not be used against the Communists because of the bad conscience of most Frenchmen and the seeming futility of raking up the past. De Gaulle, who immediately after the liberation was in a position to brand them for what they in effect were—a Soviet fifth column—out of ignorance or policy failed to do so, and when he later turned against them he had already alienated other groups in France. By this time Communist propaganda had already done its work in selling many non-Communists the Soviet myth despite the fact, perhaps because of the fact, that France had been liberated by the Americans and English and not by the Red Army.

How powerful the Communist position was in France can be gathered from the rights of extra-territoriality which the Soviet Union enjoyed until recently, including the existence of its own concentration camps to which kidnapped men and women who had acquired French citizenship were taken. So pervasive at the time was the process of Communist infiltration into all government positions and other strategic posts that Koestler's observation that the Communist Party of France

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could have taken over the country by a telephone call was hardly an exaggeration.

The legacy of fear, blackmail and silly hope in a new Soviet turn has only slowly worn off—not in virtue of any counter-propaganda but as a result of Communist intransigence in sacrificing the interests of France on the altar of Soviet foreign policy. The postwar French intellectuals were completely devoid of any political experience. Large numbers of them had been newly converted to revolutionary socialism and blossomed into full-fledged Marxists almost overnight not as a result of study but of enthusiasm. To this day they have very little understanding of what Leninism and Stalinism mean. Although they feel hurt that the French Communists "have gone too far" and "have been unfair" to their opponents, they still regard them as part of the French community. The translation of Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* came as a shock to them. The Kravchenko Trial was another. In terms of the past, their *public* participation in the International Day marked an advance for them, particularly in view of the reaction of the Communists to their support of any affair in which some harsh truths about the Soviet Union were expressed.

This evolution of opinion is related in a distinctive way to the anti-Americanism of the non-Communist French left which is in turn related to the anti-Americanism of the French public generally. For long-range purposes this last point is most important. The French public, by and large, is shockingly ignorant of the character of American life and culture. Its picture of America is a composite of impressions derived from reading the novels of social protest and revolt (Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* is taken as a faithful and *representative* account), the novels of American degeneracy (Faulkner) and inanity (Sinclair Lewis), from seeing American movies, and from exposure to an incessant Communist barrage which seeps into the non-Communist press. *The informational re-education of the French public seems to me to be the most fundamental as well as most pressing task of American democratic policy in France, towards which almost nothing along effective lines has been done.* This does not require a propaganda campaign. If the sober facts about American life in all their nakedness, good and bad, were communicated to the French public it would be sufficient to produce a revolution in this attitude.

The non-Communist left absorbs its anti-Americanism from the general milieu. But in its case this is reinforced by several special factors. First, like all political neophytes its spokesmen feel that they can only criticize the Communist Party by competing with it in revolutionary

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phrasemongery. No matter what they do its spokesmen talk "ultra-left." Second, as primitive Marxists the basic conflict appears to them to-day to be between capitalism and socialism, and although they dispute among themselves as to whether the Soviet Union is socialist, they are unanimous in thinking of the U.S. as an expanding imperialist capitalist power. Since capitalism is the main evil, the existence of cultural and political freedom by which capitalism can be transformed, is dismissed as a sham. Many among them are convinced that the American political regime is not far away from Fascism. It was instructive that Rousset felt called upon to assure his audience that he had seen with his own eyes the freedom with which Americans walk the streets and associate with each other. Farrell got the close attention of the audience when he denied that the U.S. had a fascist government. He was bringing news. (Whereupon the Trotskyists, who are post-graduates of the Stalin school of falsification and the source of the most fantastic reports about what transpired at the meeting, tagged him as a flag-waving American imperialist.) The American literary expatriates either contribute to this kind of information by puffing up some of the shameful episodes in American life or remain silent for fear of being tagged as apologists of America and losing some of their "existentialist" friends.*

Finally, it costs nothing—there are absolutely no risks—in denouncing American culture and foreign policy, whereas naggingly present in the consciousness of these Frenchmen, and not only them, is an awareness that the borders of France are only a short march from the Soviet outposts in Europe. And the sad fact is that at present the fears of France are deeper than its hopes and courage.

* The case of Richard Wright is a curious one. Having broken with Stalinism more on personal than on political grounds, he has no understanding of its true nature. He is flattered by the use which Sartre makes of him as a kind of club against American culture analogous to the use the Communists make of Robeson. Although he joined Sartre in his statement, in a recent interview he sought to dissociate himself from Robeson's view that the American Negroes would not fight for "American imperialism" in the event of a conflict with the Soviet Union. According to Wright they would and should. But if he believes the statement he signed, such a position makes no sense. Only Robeson's position is consistent with Sartre's simple-minded formulas.

In the same interview—which since it appeared in the Trotskyist press may have been edited according to Bolshevik ethics—Wright pretended he had discussed his position with me in Paris. I have never exchanged two words with him on politics or anything else. He also refers to me as one "who proclaims to high heaven that he is an orthodox Marxist." This means that he has not read a line—but not a line!—of anything I have ever written about Marx or Marxism. If any additional commentary were needed about the character of left-wing French political thought, the emergence of Wright and Garry Davis as political figures would be sufficient.

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Frederick Kiesler

PSEUDO-FUNCTIONALISM IN MODERN ARCHITECTURE

the floor plan

The floor plan is no more than the footprint of a house. From a flat impression of this sort it is difficult to conceive the actual form and content of the building. If God had begun the creation of man with a footprint, a monster all heels and toes would probably have grown up from it, not man. (He might have been without head and arms, to say nothing of his internal structure.) Fortunately the creation proceeded otherwise, growing out of a nuclear conception. Out of a single germ cell which contained the *whole* and which slowly developed into the separate floors and rooms of man. This cell, owing its origin to the erotic and creative instinct and not to any intellectual mandate, is the nucleus of the human edifice. It is a strange compound; while still a gelatinous mass it contains the future man, his mind and his instinct, his sweat and his dream. It is as though nature cast the first ball into the arena of life, and then stood by with folded arms to see what the play of circumstances would make of it. Whatever sort of creature results, it is never deflated, but three-dimensional, like a ball; it seeks *coordination*. With all its senses it breathes *contact*. It is connected by an infinite number of ties, bonds, rays, waves, molecular bridges, with the visible, the tangible, that which can be readily smelled and equally with that which cannot be so readily smelled, that which is not immediately tangible, the invisible; and it puts forth myriad threads of its own in order to entangle itself still further in life. It cannot live without *others*. Its life is community. Its reality is a co-reality. Its realism of realization is a correalism. Its reality is a realism of coordinated forces which condi-

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tion, limit, push, pull, support one another; which leap together and leap apart like groups of acrobats in a circus, who transform themselves from one unit of two or more bodies into another unit, without losing their balance. In life this balance can be lost only once. And then there is no net to catch one, as in the arena. There is only death. Correalism expires.

If we had progressed to the point of working freely, that is, of creating a concrete thing free from the realities of routine, then we architects would surely not plan buildings by "drawing floor plans"; we would first of all (and I have been trying to do this for many years*) project on paper the nucleus of the "dwelling-universe": *the nervous system of the house.* At this stage we need not greatly concern ourselves with the future ears, hands and other functional organs of the body of the house, for these possibilities are of course already present in the germ cell of the initial draft. The feet of our houses, or stairs, the noses, or ventilators—all these structural units have today once more been technically well solved (as in pharaonic Egypt and in Renaissance Italy)—these elements are available; they can be had for money. What cannot be bought is the character of the species. This must be invented. And in order to achieve it, all of the creative instinct of an individual who takes it upon himself to be an architect is needed. "Modernized" tradition is not enough. Himself a being which does not consist only of muscle, bone and fluid—an architect should conceive of a new house not as mere walls and roof with a heating and cooling system, but as a living organism with the reactivity of a full-blooded creature. The house is not a digestive apparatus. Man is a nucleus of natural forces, living in emotions and dreams, through the medium of his physique. Every millimeter of his physical environment is inspiration, not merely mechanical contact. But his aesthetic needs cannot be lastingly satisfied by pictures, carpets, tapestries and candelabra intended to make his house "livable."

On the other hand, we must not—in the hope of making the house commodious—turn the process of its creation in reverse, and begin with the "purely" aesthetic element, building in the practical

* See designs for the "Endless," Paris 1925, reproduced in the Architectural Record of 1931; "Space House," Architectural Record, 1935; "Salle de Superstition," *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui,* Paris, April, 1949.

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and functional afterward; we must strive from the outset *to satisfy the psyche of the dweller.* Moreover, the needs of the psyche should not be repressed and projected in surface decoration. Such aestheticism is a hypocritical mask, which must eventually be cast off. Whether the mask be of concrete, glass or plastic, made to measure or prefabricated, it remains a mask and is not inwardly bound up with creative man.

Man's living needs are simple. They become complicated and hypocritical only as a result of artificial stimulations—in architecture as elsewhere. Honest building can be done in wood, mud and stone, just as dishonest building can be done with alpha glass and beta aluminum.

The individual as well as the couple and the large family can adapt himself by *natural will* and instinct to unfavorable *physical conditions* (cathedrals were built by slum dwellers), but they cannot submit for long to unfavorable *psychic conditions.* Under certain circumstances they will ultimately leave the finest windowframe (admitting no draft), the best-laid (highly polished) floors, and withdraw to a cave in order to be free and happy. "Technical perfection" is never achieved. It is at once dream and nightmare. Only the free artist can be "perfect" in his painting or sculpture and produce something final. The technician is the slave of "progress"; consequently his perfection is only ostensible and largely a matter of circumstances. Such perfection is conditional; the work of art alone is unconditional. Technology (and especially the technology of machines) is entirely relative, or rather, correlative.

The law of creative transmutation

Functionalism is determinism and therefore stillborn. Functionalism is the standardization of routine activity. For example: a foot that walks (but does not dance); an eye that sees (but does not envision); a hand that grasps (but does not create).

Functionalism relieves the architect of responsibility to his concept. He mechanizes in terms of the current inherited conception of the practical, and little more; only simplifying and rendering ascetic what is already traditional. Actually, however, he does violence to the freedom and self-realization of the basic functions of living man.

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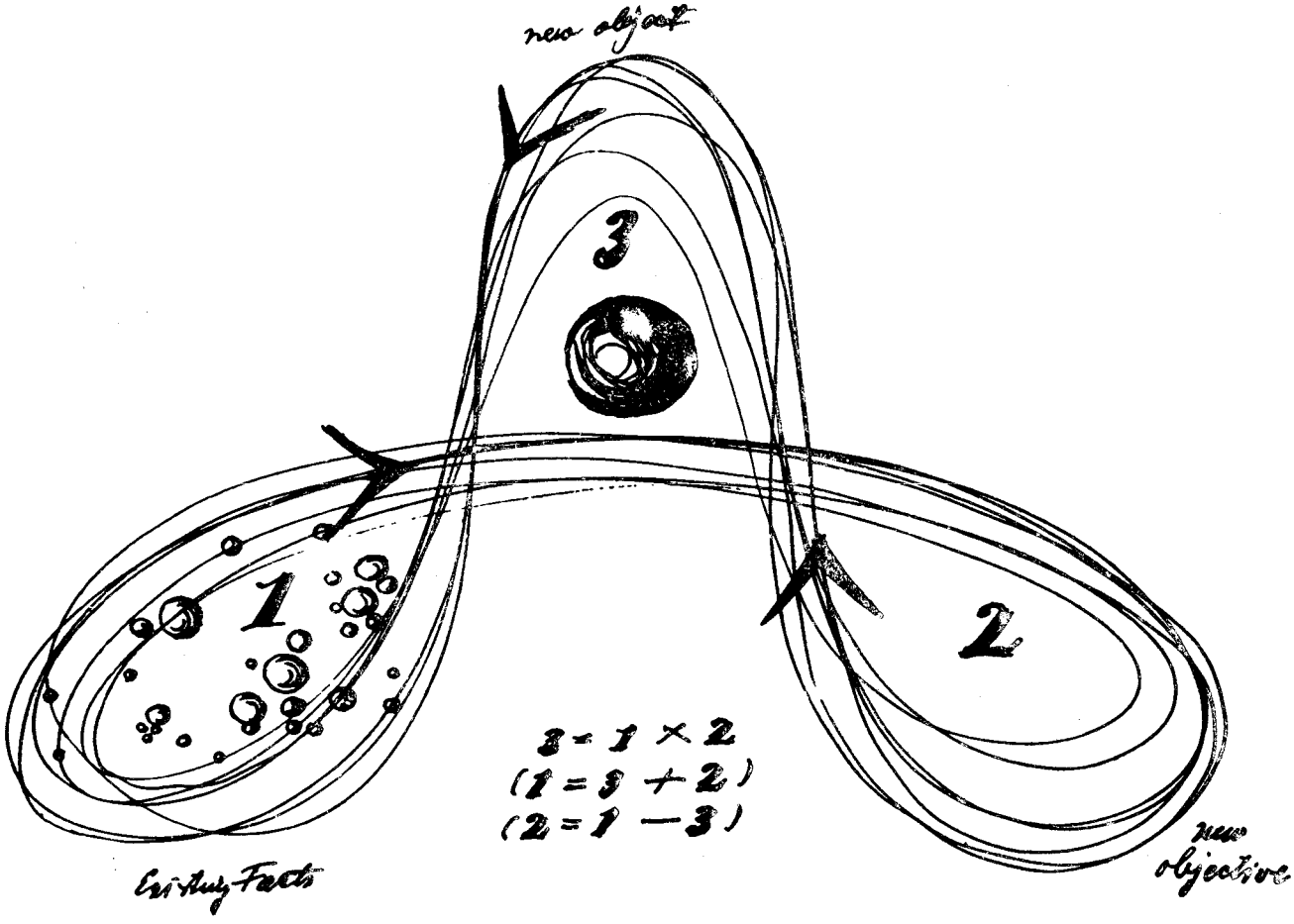

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The species is known by the total coordination of its functions, not by its esophagus.

Modern functionalism in architecture has its roots far more in contemporary abstract painting than in the "functionalism of living."* And the curved forms that are now appearing in furniture and buildings, did not originate in "psychological" functionalism but in the formal idiom of surrealism. Some architects have confused geometric forms with abstraction, have taken simplicity (or planimetry) for functionalism, and called it "organic architecture." It was a stroke of luck that "abstract" simplicity fitted in with the principles of hygiene, fostered at that time by industry and labor.

In reality the true functionalist will accept no standard as final. He lives-through the existing standard, and by this experience becomes independent of the standard as such. Then, by the force of this constant materialism (1) and of his imagination which has thus been liberated, he crystallizes the new objective (2) and the new object (3). Not only does he now gradually come to master the conditions amid which his new object must be born, but through his new, real objects, he changes the conditions themselves (see Metabolism Chart Home Library**). The new idea has now become material (1) and the creative cycle begins anew.

By a change in the preponderance of the life-forces, the center of interest and attraction may shift from material fact (1) to the idea (2), from the idea—to the object (3); and in this continuous flux any other shift of emphasis is equally possible.

Thus two of three components always assume a secondary place in the total structure, and even the potential relation between these two will vary according to their correlative position. Nevertheless the strength of all three components can never be equal, for if it were, continuity would end in a static balance. The process of rebirth would be impossible. It would seem that perfect balance cannot exist in nature, and ultimately one force must become predominant over

* Two clear examples of the direct influence of abstract painting on the architecture of Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, can be found in *Cubism and Abstract Art,* published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1939.

** "Architecture as Biotechnique," report of the Laboratory, School of Architecture, Columbia University, published in the "Architectural Record," New York, 1939.

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another. Thus "function" appears not as a finite fact or standard, but as a process of continuous transmutation.

> Form does not follow function.
> Function follows vision.
> Vision follows reality.

The "abstract functionalist" was a master of self-deception. With the honesty of a fanatic he deceived his fellowmen (clients) and himself, by "improving" on the "accredited" standard of function along more abstract or super-fantastic lines, without realizing that the function which his work represents is, in spite of technical and decorative improvements, still the old hereditary residue. Modern lampshades could never "improve" on the "function" of the oil lamp to the point where kerosene would become electricity and a wick the filament of a light-bulb. Any improvement on an obsolete form or function ultimately arrives at its own dead end; the new cannot be grafted on the obsolescent, for it has other functional roots. The law of creative transmutation demands its inborn right, i.e. obsolescence and rebirth.

They all speak of functionalism, but they have forgotten to define the world of latent functions, that is, to examine the validity of existing functions, to find new functions and eliminate obsolete ones. More glass and light, flowers on the floor instead of on window sills, combination living and dining rooms, do not do the job. They wish to make a new architecture out of pseudo-functions, but all they do in reality is to consolidate the bank account of their professional aura.

We must not, however, put too much blame on the architect himself, because the normal curriculum of a school of architecture does not make him master of those sciences necessary for the understanding of man as a biological, psychological, socio-political being. The architect's education of today is still professionally isolationist.

The position of the architect as a "worker for others" is even more difficult than that of the social planner, who stands close to him in the matter of structural principles; for in the morphology of the "technical environment" the architect combines the laws of society with exigencies of a physical order as well as the psychic influ-

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ences of individuals; moreover, in attempting to realize his plans, he must lean on the techniques of other specialists, such as engineers, sculptors, painters and diverse artisans of the building trades. Although the "architect" shares his work with so many, he carries by far the greatest part of the responsibility, for neither he nor the other technicians are going to live in the house they are building, but some anonymous citizen who trusts that the home which other hands are building for him will be a healthy place to live in.

Which of us architects dares to assume *not* the aesthetic but the full moral responsibility for a building? What architect has enjoyed the training that will give him sufficient understanding of the human morphology for which he is building? Architecture today is neither science, craft, nor art. Measured by progress in the social sciences and in technical invention, we draftsmen are still architectosauruses.

Direct and indirect building

Functional architecture is animal-architecture, i.e. it produces structures for physical shelter. But animals build more economically, since they merely repeat the tradition of the species, that lies in their blood. Man is always dissatisfied, because he wants to lead the life of a master and is therefore eternally searching for new materials, implements and machines to serve as his slaves. Instead of relying on himself, man relies on progress.

A house must be practical. To be practical means to serve. To be serviceable in every respect. In every direction. If any directions are closed, the house suffers from constipation. But how can a house be practical if the draftsman always begins with the flat ground plan? Our vision is physically flat—we see with one eye (mono-dimensionally) rather than stereoscopically, with two eyes, as a living spatial vision would require.

The ground plan is only a flat imprint of a volume. The volume of the principal activity to be expected in the house is not taken into consideration; instead, squares and rectangles, long ones, short ones, bent ones, are juxtaposed, or sometimes jumbled—and then superimposed in storeys (elevation plan). This box construction is not in

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keeping with the practice of living. A house is a volume in which people live polydimensionally It is the sum of every possible movement its inhabitants can make within it; and these movements in turn are imbued with the flux of instinct.

Hence it is fallacious to begin with a floor plan. We must strive to capture a *general sense* of dwelling, and configurate accordingly. This is difficult but not impossible. It is difficult, if only because the space of the house is polydimensional, and as such real, while the design cannot but be two-dimensional (it is imprisoned on paper so to speak). But if the design is intrinsically two-dimensional, that is all the more reason why we must not see two-dimensionally, or feel two-dimensionally *a priori.*

Primitive, prehistoric man drew no ground plans for his house. He drew no architectural design whatsoever. Not even with his finger in the sand or mud. He built *directly.* He formed space directly into a house. And from the very first peg (or block) he already lived in it. By the time the last stone or the last leaf was laid in place, the house had already been experienced, tested. In short, the inhabitants gradually put on the house; as one might put on garments until covered.

The mechanization of dwelling construction proceeded roughly as follows:

a) Primitive man builds directly—without design—for himself and his family.

b) The semi-civilized man builds directly—still without plans—but he builds also for other families.

c) "Civilized" man builds for others, people of means, and submits sketches to help sell his products. He becomes a specialist, a master builder for himself and others; he designs and also builds;

d) The machine man only designs, he no longer builds but leaves the building to other specialists; he no longer builds for himself but only for others; this is the architect of today.

e) Possible future development: The architect no longer designs the house himself. It is collectively planned (by a group of specialists in construction, mechanized equipment and decoration), collectively built—and administered.

This social standardization has given rise to a standardization

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not only of the parts of houses, but of architectural forms as well.

If the standardization of architectural elements resulted from scientific knowledge (as in the case of machine construction) there would be no present objection; but since (even in the fabrication of steel rail profiles) the measurements, weights, and joints of the parts *are derived from previous architectural projects* (and not from a study of life processes and the needs they create), the resultant home is not an organic *whole* but a *conglomerate*. After the floors, walls and ceilings are in place, man is invited to orient himself in this vacuum and to make himself as comfortable as he can (with the help of furniture and decoration). The original architect-designer has never lived in this house, he has no experience of living in the place, and there is no architectural laboratory existent where he can observe man in an architectural environment. The experience is left to the dweller when it is too late to make fundamental changes. The present dweller who (in contrast to primitive man) never builds his own house or plans it, is completely subjected to the dictatorship of the architect and building contractor. The dweller of today has become an architectural slave.

It is difficult in a brief space to make the confusion prevailing in the construction industry clear to the layman (or to the average architect). There is a general prudery that prevents people from looking too closely into great technical achievements or institutions (the same air of secrecy surrounded the sex life of our grandparents). Nevertheless the Euclidean system has been replaced, and recently the electric light bulb has given way to the fluorescent tube. The public accepts new philosophies much more easily, largely because people never have time to study them closely, and because they think that these philosophies are too far removed from "real" life to be dangerous.

But we must not forget that the specialization of occupations has brought with it a vast decline in general knowledge. If industry produces so much today, it is mainly for the sake of investments. Industry does not serve basic needs but turns out repetitions or stylish modifications of commodities that have proved saleable. Architects and draftsmen are its unsuspecting accomplices.

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Via Apea

Man is an acrobatic animal that finally succeeded in standing on its hind legs, but his mind still crawls on all fours. He should know that all the devices he arrives at through his intellect have long been perceived by the vision of poets. To prove this there is no need to invoke the ideas of a Leonardo da Vinci or the writings of a Cyrano de Bergerac (who in 1640 described the phonograph). Poetry since the earliest times bears witness.

The misery of man lies far deeper: in his inability to construct anything that has not been experienced by the imagination.

He is utterly caught in the net of his imagination.

Nature holds him as a hostage.

If he could break through this net—he would be free.

But man travels the Apean way. It is his destiny to ape.

At best, to ape himself. To realize his own visions mechanically.

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Philip Rahv

THE UNFUTURE OF UTOPIA

George Orwell has been able to maintain an exceptional position among the writers of our time seriously concerned with political problems. His work has grown in importance and relevance through the years, evincing a steadiness of purpose and uncommon qualities of character and integrity that set it quite apart from the typical products of the radical consciousness in this period of rout and retreat. A genuine humanist in his commitments, a friend, that is, not merely of mankind but of man (man as he is, not denatured by ideological abstractions), Orwell has gone through the school of the revolutionary movement without taking over its snappishly doctrinaire attitudes. His attachment to the primary traditions of the British empirical mind has apparently rendered him immune to dogmatism. Nor has the release from certitude lately experienced by the more alert radical intellectuals left him in the disoriented state in which many of his contemporaries now find themselves. Above all endowed with a strong sense of reality, he has neither played the prophet in or out of season nor indulged in that wilful and irresponsible theorizing at present so much in vogue in certain radical quarters where it is mistaken for independent thought. It can be said of Orwell that he is the best kind of witness, the most reliable and scrupulous. All the more appalling, then, is the vision not of the remote but of the very close future evoked in his new novel*—a vision entirely composed of images of loss, disaster, and unspeakable degradation.

This is far and away the best of Orwell's books. As a narrative it has tension and actuality to a terrifying degree; still it will not do to judge it primarily as a literary work of art. Like all Utopian literature, from Sir Thomas More and Campanella to William Morris, Bellamy, and Huxley, its inspiration is scarcely such as to be aesthetically productive of ultimate or positive significance; this seems to be true of Utopian writings regardless of the viewpoint from which the author approaches

* *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. By George Orwell. Harcourt, Brace. $3.00.

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his theme. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* chiefly appeals to us as a work of the political imagination, and the appeal is exercised with gravity and power. It documents the crisis of socialism with greater finality than Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, to which it will be inevitably compared, since it belongs, on one side of it, to the same genre, the melancholy mid-century genre of lost illusions and Utopia betrayed.

While in Koestler's novel there are still lingering traces of nostalgia for the Soviet Utopia, at least in its early heroic phase, and fleeting tenderness for its protagonists, betrayers and betrayed—some are depicted as Promethean types wholly possessed by the revolutionary dogma and annihilated by the consequences of their own excess, the *hubris* of Bolshevism—in Orwell's narrative the further stage of terror that has been reached no longer permits even the slightest sympathy for the revolutionaries turned totalitarian. Here Utopia is presented, with the fearful simplicity of a trauma, as the abyss into which the future falls. The traditional notion of Utopia as the future good is thus turned inside out, inverted—nullified. It is now sheer mockery to speak of its future. Far more accurate it is to speak of its *unfuture*. (The addition of the negative affix "un" is a favorite usage of Newspeak, the official language of Ingsoc—English socialism—a language in which persons purged by the Ministry of Love, i.e., the secret police, are invariably described as *unpersons*. The principles of Newspeak are masterfully analyzed by Orwell in the appendix to his book. Newspeak is nothing less than a plot against human consciousness, for its sole aim is so to reduce the range of thought through the destruction of words as to make *"thoughtcrime* literally impossible because there will be no words in which to express it.")

The prospect of the future drawn in this novel can on no account be taken as a phantasy. If it inspires dread above all, that is precisely because its materials are taken from the real world as we know it, from conditions now prevailing in the totalitarian nations, in particular the Communist nations, and potentially among us too. Ingsoc, the system established in Oceania, the totalitarian super-State that unites the English-speaking peoples, is substantially little more than an extension into the near future of the present structure and policy of Stalinism, an extension as ingenious as it is logical, predicated upon conditions of permanent war and the development of the technical means of espionage and surveillance to the point of the complete extinction of private life. Big Brother, the supreme dictator of Oceania, is obviously modeled on Stalin, both in his physical features and in his literary style ("a style at once military and pedantic, and, because of a trick of asking questions

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and then promptly answering them . . . easy to imitate"). And who is Goldstein, the dissident leader of Ingsoc against whom Two Minute Hate Periods are conducted in all Party offices, if not Trotsky, the grand heresiarch and useful scapegoat, who is even now as indispensable to Stalin as Goldstein is shown to be to Big Brother? The inserted chapters from Goldstein's imaginary book on "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism," are a wonderfully realised imitation not only of Trotsky's characteristic rhetoric but also of his mode and manner as a Marxist theoretician. Moreover, the established pieties of Communism are at once recognizable in the approved spiritual regimen of the Ingsoc Party faithful: "A Party member is expected to have no private emotions and no respites from enthusiasm. He is supposed to live in a continuous frenzy of hatred of foreign enemies and internal traitors, triumph over victories, and self-abasement before the power and wisdom of the Party." One of Orwell's best strokes is his analysis of the technique of "doublethink," drilled into the Party members, which consists of the willingness to assert that black is white when the Party demands it, and even to believe that black is white, while at the same time knowing very well that nothing of the sort can be true. Now what is "doublethink," actually, if not the technique continually practiced by the Communists and their liberal collaborators, dupes, and apologists. Nor is it a technique available exclusively to Soviet citizens. Right here in New York any issue of *The Daily Worker* or of *The Daily Compass* will provide you with illustrations of it as vicious and ludicrous as any you will come upon in Orwell's story. As for "the control of the past," of which so much is made in Oceania through the revision of all records and the manipulation of memory through force and fraud, that too is by no means unknown in Russia, where periodically not only political history but also the history of art and literature are revamped in accordance with the latest edicts of the regime. The one feature of Oceanic society that appears to be really new is the proscription of sexual pleasure. The fact is, however, that a tendency in that direction has long been evident in Russia, where a new kind of prudery, disgusting in its unctuousness and hypocrisy, is officially promoted. In Oceania "the only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party." The new Russian laws regulating sexual relations are manifestly designed with the same purpose in mind. It is plain that any society which imposes a ban on personal experience must sooner or later distort and inhibit the sexual instinct. The totalitarian State cannot tolerate attachments between men and women that fall outside the political sphere and that are in their very nature difficult to control from above.

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The diagnosis of the totalitarian perversion of socialism that Orwell makes in this book is far more remarkable than the prognosis it contains. This is not to deny that the book is prophetic; but its importance is mainly in its powerful engagement with the present. Through the invention of a society of which he can be imaginatively in full command, Orwell is enabled all the more effectively to probe the consequences for the human soul of the system of oligarchic collectivism—the system already prevailing in a good part of the world, which millions of people even this side of the Iron Curtain believe to be true-blue socialism and which at this time constitutes the only formidable threat to free institutions. Hence to read this novel simply as a flat prediction of what is to come is to misread it. It is not a writ of fatalism to bind our wills. Orwell makes no attempt to persuade us, for instance, that the English-speaking nations will inevitably lose their freedom in spite of their vigorous democratic temper and libertarian traditions. "Wave of the future" notions are alien to Orwell. His intention, rather, is to prod the Western world into a more conscious and militant resistance to the totalitarian virus to which it is now exposed.

As in *Darkness at Noon,* so in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* one of the major themes is the psychology of capitulation. Winston Smith, the hero of the novel, is shown arming himself with ideas against the Party and defying it by forming a sexual relationship with Julia; but from the first we know that he will not escape the secret police, and after he is caught we see him undergoing a dreadful metamorphosis which burns out his human essence, leaving him a wreck who can go on living only by becoming one of "them." The closing sentences of the story are the most pitiful of all: "He had won a victory over himself. He loved Big Brother." The meaning of the horror of the last section of the novel, with its unbearable description of the torture of Smith by O'Brien, the Ingsoc Commissar, lies in its disclosure of a truth that the West still refuses to absorb. Hence the widespread mystifications produced by the Moscow Trials ("Why did they confess?") and, more recently, by the equally spectacular displays of confessional ardor in Russia's satellite states (Cardinal Mindszenty and others). The truth is that the modern totalitarians have devised a methodology of terror that enables them to break human beings by getting inside them. They explode the human character from within, exhibiting the pieces as the irrefutable proof of their own might and virtue. Thus Winston Smith begins with the notion that even if nothing else in the world was his own, still there were a few cubic centimeters inside his skull that belonged to him alone. But O'Brien, with his torture instruments and ruthless dialectic of power,

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soon teaches him that even these few cubic centimeters can never belong to him, only to the Party. What is so implacable about the despotisms of the twentieth century is that they have abolished martyrdom. If all through history the capacity and willingness to suffer for one's convictions served at once as the test and demonstration of sincerity, valor, and heroic resistance to evil, now even that capacity and willingness have been rendered meaningless. In the prisons of the M.V.D. or the Ministry of Love suffering has been converted into its opposite—into the ineluctable means of surrender. The victim crawls before his torturer, he identifies himself with him and grows to love him. That is the ultimate horror.

The dialectic of power is embodied in the figure of O'Brien, who simultaneously recalls and refutes the ideas of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor. For a long time we thought that the legend of the Grand Inquisitor contained the innermost secrets of the power-mongering human mind. But no, modern experience has taught us that the last word is by no means to be found in Dostoevsky. For even the author of *The Brothers Karamazov,* who wrote that "man is a despot by nature and loves to be a torturer," was for all his crucial insights into evil nevertheless incapable of seeing the Grand Inquisitor as he really is. There are elements of the idealistic rationalization of power in the ideology of the Grand Inquisitor that we must overcome if we are to become fully aware of what the politics of totalitarianism come to in the end.

Clearly, that is what Orwell has in mind in the scene when Smith, while yielding more and more to O'Brien, voices the thoughts of the Grand Inquisitor only to suffer further pangs of pain for his persistence in error. Smith thinks that he will please O'Brien by explaining the Party's limitless desire for power along Dostoevskyean lines: "That the Party did not seek power for its own ends, but only for the good of the majority. That it sought power because men in the mass were frail, cowardly creatures who could not endure liberty or face the truth, and must be ruled over and systematically deceived by others stronger than themselves. That the choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and that, for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better. That the Party was the eternal guardian of the weak, a dedicated sect doing evil that good might come, sacrificing its own happiness to that of others." This is a fair summary of the Grand Inquisitor's ideology. O'Brien, however, has gone beyond even this last and most insidious rationalization of power. He forcibly instructs Smith in the plain truth that "the Party seeks power for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power. . . . Power is not

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a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes a revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now do you begin to understand me?" And how does one human being assert his power over another human being? By making him suffer, of course. For "obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own? Power is in inflicting pain and humiliation. Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing." That, precisely, is the lesson the West must learn if it is to comprehend the meaning of Communism. Otherwise we shall go on playing Winston Smith, falling sooner or later into the hands of the O'Briens of the East, who will break our bones until we scream with love for Big Brother.

But there is one aspect of the psychology of power in which Dostoevsky's insight strikes me as being more viable than Orwell's strict realism. It seems to me that Orwell fails to distinguish, in the behavior of O'Brien, between psychological and objective truth. Undoubtedly it is O'Brien, rather than Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, who reveals the real nature of total power; yet that does not settle the question of O'Brien's personal psychology, the question, that is, of his ability to live with this naked truth as his sole support; nor is it conceivable that the party-elite to which he belongs could live with this truth for very long. Evil, far more than good, is in need of the pseudo-religious justifications so readily provided by the ideologies of world-salvation and compulsory happiness, ideologies generated both by the Left and the Right. Power is its own end, to be sure, but even the Grand Inquisitors are compelled, now as always, to believe in the fiction that their power is a means to some other end, gratifyingly noble and supernal. Though O'Brien's realism is wholly convincing in social and political terms, its motivation in the psychological economy of the novel remains unclear.

Another aspect of Orwell's dreadful Utopia that might be called into question is the role he attributes to the proletariat, a role that puts it ouside politics. In Oceania the workers, known as the Proles, are assigned to the task of production, deprived of all political rights, but unlike the Party members, are otherwise left alone and even permitted to lead private lives in accordance with their own choice. That is an idea that appears to me to run contrary to the basic tendencies of totalitarianism. All societies of our epoch, whether authoritarian or democratic in structure, are mass-societies; and an authoritarian state built on the foundations of a mass-society could scarcely afford the luxury of allowing

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any class or group to evade its demand for complete control. A totalitarian-collectivist state is rigidly organized along hierarchical lines, but that very fact, so damaging to its socialist claims, necessitates the domination of all citizens, of whatever class, in the attempt to "abolish" the contradiction between its theory and practice by means of boundless demagogy and violence.

These are minor faults, however. This novel is the best antidote to the totalitarian disease that any writer has so far produced. Everyone should read it; and I recommend it particularly to those liberals who still cannot get over the political superstition that while absolute power is bad when exercised by the Right, it is in its very nature good and a boon to humanity once the Left, that is to say "our own people," takes hold of it.

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BOOKS

CULTURE, RELIGION, AND MR. ELIOT

NOTES TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE. By T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

In none of his other books has T. S. Eliot taken as little advantage of his special gifts as in this one. He writes of sociological problems in the language of the sociologist, treating in very brief space those questions of class, caste and elites and of the relation of culture and religion, to which Mannheim, Pareto, Tawney and Malinowski devote many volumes. Eliot is quite explicit in requiring us to remain within sociological modes of thought: "Nor can we rely upon any evidence from the United States," he says, talking of the perpetuation of government by elites. "For the sociologist, the evidence from America is not yet ripe." And later, in asserting the dependence of Western culture on dogmatic Christianity, "I am convinced of that, not merely because I am a Christian myself, but as a student of social biology."

The brevity of these notes means, however, that they can comprise none of the supporting material, the detailed studies of comparative and contrasted cultures, on which anthropological generalizations are commonly based. It is true that, insofar as this age is unique in the extent of its democracy, industrialism and anthropocentric rationalism and—as Eliot asserts—in the consequent debasement of its culture, such comparisons may increase our pessimism without helping us to predict the future or see anywhere we could go except—as Eliot recommends—back into the irrecoverable past. Nevertheless, if such comparisons are to be made as Eliot makes them, and if it is the whole culture which is in question, then we need to consider, as Eliot does not, the divisions, alienations and spiritual sicknesses of other periods than our own, of the Renaissance, of the fourteenth century, of Virgilian Rome. For such social trials and tensions are a cause—though not a sufficient cause—of the creativity of a culture as they are, in a more private way, of the creativity of the individual artist. The most thorough historical study, however, could hardly prove that the only positive way in which a culture

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can conceivably respond creatively to its tensions and divisions is by recovering literal belief in specific mythic events of the past.

Eliot is not, of course, attempting such a detailed historical demonstration, though his conclusions require it. The extreme of his ambition, he says, is to rescue the word *culture* from abuse. He wishes, in an entirely backward view, to establish the conditions under which culture is possible at all, by seeing what conditions of religion and class differentiation have supported it in the past. He does not ask the progressive who is unwilling to restore such conditions to change his political faith. "I merely ask him to stop paying lip-service to culture." But despite the title of this collection, *culture* is never very satisfactorily defined in it, nor does Eliot suggest any permanent standards by which one culture may be compared with another. As several reviewers have pointed out, Eliot uses the word in different senses, sometimes inclusive, sometimes selective, sometimes merely descriptive, sometimes eulogistic. The result of this equivocation, since his argument is highly abstract and syllogistic, is to lead us into what seems like question-begging and circular proof. Because of the almost total absence of illustration, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* lacks the literary excitements that occurred in *After Strange Gods* when Lawrence and Hardy were treated in terms of diabolism, and Joyce, of religious orthodoxy.

Though Eliot writes as a sociologist, he also writes as a dogmatic Christian, and this involves him in very difficult questions of the relation of the conditioned and the unconditioned, the temporal and the timeless in human history. When he talks of the attitudes and beliefs of Liberalism as doomed to disappear because they belong to a past age of free capitalism, he uses a Marxian mode of analysis, and likewise when he describes the changes in the Anglican church that have resulted from economic, class and educational changes in English society. But though the cultural and institutional forms of Christianity may be treated as in a sense socially conditioned, the doctrines may not. For Eliot, Christian doctrine does not develop any more than, in the long run, culture does. It has simply been necessary to define Christian doctrine more exactly as heresies appeared. "The life-long battle of St. Athanasius against the Arians and Eutychians need not be regarded in any other light than the light of theology: the scholar who endeavored to demonstrate that it represented a culture-clash between Alexandria and Antioch, or some similar ingenuity, would appear to us at best to be talking about something else."

But for Eliot a religion need not be true as revealed truth to be culturally superior in some respects to Christianity. "A people whose cul-

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ture has been formed together with a religion of partial truth, may live that religion (at some period in its history, at least) with greater fidelity than another people which has a truer light." And there seem to be circumstances, though he does not define them, under which Eliot would be willing to support political or ecclesiastical acts which would lead to a deterioration of culture.

Nevertheless, despite all that can be said in criticism of the obscurities, obscurantism and tautology of these essays, it is good that they were published. They ought to awaken in the colleges and quarterly reviews most under Eliot's influence a sense of the total American culture, a qualitative sense of the popular arts in their relation to politics and the American way of life. They ought to give the academic mind an uncomfortable sense that a verbal analysis of a poem by Marvell cannot be ultimately separated from whatever may be on the radio at the moment. Because of Eliot's prestige these essays ought to stimulate a general discussion of what cultural responsibility in a democracy really means. A number of reviewers, seeing how thoroughly reactionary these essays appeared, how they recalled the tradition of de Maistre, de Bonald, Burke and Comte, devoted their reviews to congratulating themselves on having so much more confidence than Mr. Eliot in human progress, individual creativity and the prospects of a democratic culture. But they spoke as abstractly as Eliot, and with rather less ground. For democratic liberalism has no theory of culture as Marxism has, of cultural changes and developments and their causes. And no doctrine of the independent reality of the beautiful as Thomism has. It certainly cannot, with any exact knowledge of American public schools and the mass cultural media, base its optimism on the observation that in a free capitalist society the artistically good will triumph automatically over the artistically bad. And if it looks forward to a socialist society in which cultural vulgarity cannot be exploited for profit, it makes no effort to imagine how in that society such practical matters as the official allotment of printing privileges could conceivably permit the spontaneity of an avant-garde or heretical art. Nor do the trade unions or left democratic political groups show, as Eliot does, any interest in preserving the kind of pluralistic society of comparatively autonomous associations and foundations and educational corporations which made it possible for men like Abelard and Rabelais and Erasmus to function under an earlier authoritarianism. In the Soviet Union, where a privileged elite able to extend advantages to its families seems already in existence, the political dictatorship over culture is ruthlessly destructive, but the abstract jargon, the lack of any real feeling for the past, in our own New School theorists of education

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and democratic culture, suggest that the philistinism of a more open and Western socialism would be hardly less stifling.

The habit of democratic social scientists and academicians is to regard popular culture as something given, as something to be amused by, something to be studied for its psychological and sociological revelations, something social scientists attempt to alter only if it creates undemocratic tensions and maladjustments, as in its use of racial stereotypes, or fails to support national morale in time of stress. They do not feel responsibility for the total adequacy of this culture as compared to the cultures of the past, or make a qualitative judgment of what is required culturally which influences them definitely in what would otherwise be purely economic or political decisions.

One does not have to abandon naturalistic humanism or accept what is genuinely reactionary in Eliot's attitude, to believe that this sense of responsibility will develop. With the moderation of faith in Emersonian individualism and in an immediate future that will somehow take care of everything, interest is bound to increase in the way in which the culture of the present can create a pattern of expectancies which is consistent with the actualities of life and yet transcends them. It can transcend them by providing symbols and customs which give a sense of communion not only with other members of society but with the significant experiences of the past. It will be valued not only for the way in which it satisfies intelligence and the sense of beauty, but for the extent to which it provides, on both conscious and unconscious levels, positive social means of mastering the anxieties, conflicts and ultimate tragedy of human experience.

Robert Gorham Davis

TWENTY-SEVEN STORIES

NINETEEN STORIES. By Graham Greene. Viking Press. $2.75.
A TREE OF NIGHT AND OTHER STORIES. By Truman Capote. Random House. $2.75.

Graham Greene, who writes two kinds of books, serious novels and entertainments, is never as serious or entertaining a writer as when he writes a simple story about childhood, leaving out crooks, spies, confidential agents and his own brand of Anxiety. There are several such stories in the present collection and they are the best in the volume (three of them, in fact, are good), because they were written without the intention of distilling from the steam of the pot boiler a moral critique

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of our age. Which is to say that Greene is at his best when he is least himself.

For once the perspective is immediate. We come directly to the unhappy child and his trouble without having to make the usual detour through the secondary symbol formations of flight and pursuit, etc., of the thrillers. Childhood, for Greene, is the time of the innocence and horror of sex. The innocent, in the story by that name, is the young boy capable of leaving a love message for his sweetheart in the form of a crude drawing of a man and a woman in the sex act. The grown man, returning to the scene with a prostitute for a one night stand, discovers the message still intact in its hiding place and realizes, " . . . later that night, when Lola turned away from me and fell asleep . . . the deep innocence of that drawing. I had believed I was drawing something with a meaning unique and beautiful; it was only now after thirty years of life that the picture seemed obscene." In "The Basement Room" (a parable of the unconscious), young Master Philip finds not a unique and beautiful meaning but something from which he spends the rest of his life in a frozen recoil; and this again is sex, now linked with murder and guilt. "The Hint of an Explanation" is the story of how a man found happiness and security in the Catholic Faith; which he would not have found, had he not been strongly tempted by the perverted village anti-Papist to commit a sin against the Host; which he would not have had the strength to resist, had he not had so strong a sense of sin; which he would not have had—Greene does not carry the matter so far, but there's no way out—had he not been an unhappy child. Where again, sex . . . etc.

An unhappy childhood is a writer's gold mine, and one valuable thing Greene gets out of it is an honest basis for his stories. When he faces himself, as he makes some attempt to do here in the figure of the child, he finds he can get along without antisemitism (*Orient Express*) and the rest of the vicious trash of his entertainments. Also the arrogant moralism disappears, the gratuitous (for him) Baudelairean will to damnation and the unearned Catholic eminence from which he sees Protestantism—when the Jews don't get in his way—at its demon's task of bringing sexual ease into the world. He is much better off for the chance childhood gives him to feel sorry for himself. But though childhood themes do him good as a writer, he fails to return the favor and leaves the scene bare and devoid of quality; it is reconstructed in the adult manner, and the distance between man and child is not overcome. This is the fault, it seems to me most likely, of his desire to write confession. Accordingly, his child exists only at the moment of encountering

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sex, and his life has meaning only as it provides the material of sin and fosters the adult's need of believing in sin. But this is confessional writing at its worst; it not only conceals, it obliterates. Only that which has been touched by guilt survives in the memory; everything else of the child's world is lost—and the loss is not even noticed by the man.

But why *confession?* It is only a man with a neurotic distaste for life who can find something to confess (in the sense distinct from telling a story) about childhood. This has made him suffer as a writer; it has robbed his scenes of richness and given his style a puckered quality, with neither warmth nor a generous rhythm. (His characteristic use of the colon, which is meant for crispness but suggests something withered, is a half stop for a pinch of alum to keep his writing wry and dry.) Save for a few unconscious lapses into vitality, Greene's whole manner is a courtship of death, and he must support himself in it only because it suits both an inherent unease of soul and an acquired one, laid on himself in a need to overcome mediocrity. He would very much like to show a depth of anguish in his work, and on his forehead the star of the damned. He succeeds in doing neither. For all his concern with morality, sin, guilt, crime, retribution and Catholicism, he remains a middlebrow with a good location—a frontage on Crisis Theology.

Capote is not even that much. All that remains when the confetti and fluff have been carted away is the question, How can writing be so empty? The mere physiology of this art, the fact that the setting of words on paper calls certain reflexes into play should insure at least the physical presence of a person. You won't find him here. There is a sophistication worse than any leprosy for eating away the body. The good writer is always in one respect naive—*his* feelings are what count, his perceptions, the stuff of his own life, and like a child in the nursery he leaves his traits scattered all over his work. Nothing of the sort grows on *A Tree of Night.* When he is not drearily imitating Eudora Welty's cockeyed manner ("My Side of the Story") or her Southern pathos, with a touch of Carson MacCullers ("A Jug of Silver," "Children on Their Birthdays"), Truman Capote seems to be saying that he is quite at home among the terrors of the unconscious ("Miriam," "The Headless Hawk," "Shut a Final Door," "A Tree of Night") and who the hell is Freud? ("Master Misery"—an ignorant and snide parody of psychoanalysis).

Some writers can get away with this, but it takes more than a sophistication which, far from being the measure of the wisdom and experience of the person, is rather the disease in which he rots.

Isaac Rosenfeld

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A SOPHISTICATE IN MARCO POLO LAND

A BARBARIAN IN ASIA. By Henri Michaux. Translated by Sylvia Beach. New Directions. $2.50.

It is very hard not to like this book; it is written largely in some of the shortest paragraphs since one's second-grade reader and the apotheosis of Gertrude Stein's work; the prose has an illusive appearance of simple sentence structure that in contrast to the early Hemingway makes that writer's style compoundly infantile, and it is as stripped of cliché as though subjected to some new scientific process to eliminate dust from the air. Everything that is monumental or ample or ornate or numerous in Asia is reduced to the dimension of the tersest linguistic graffito as though the author made use of elegant extensions of *Time's* ideographic captions. And the most elusive characteristics are seen in nothing but sunlight, face to face, as when Michaux terms the Chinese soul "concave," or Calcutta a city "exclusively composed of ecclesiastics," or Japan a nation of "aesthetes."

To obtain this intimacy of effect—Michaux's tone throughout the book is the perfectly tempered courtesy of the natural aristocrat—the author has had to institute an at-arm's-length view of his subjects, quite unrelaxing so that a "focussed vision" (see page 69, top) "can be retained." If he is perpetually magnetized or repelled—and these interpolar feelings succeed one another rather bewilderingly—there is no hint of really personal *involvement*; it is as though he had sworn not to carry into the fantasy of Asia any shred of Western personalism, of that dangerous affectiveness that might lead to a "conversion," and to stay on a common level where everything could be seen, or rather, as he says, "interpreted." And it must be admitted that everything here *is* superlatively interpreted.

Like the hero who seeks the nectar of immortality in so many myths, Michaux wanted to bring back a prize from Asia, but considering the stature of his ambition, the quest turned out oddly anticlimactic; since then a world war and other things have taken place. In a preface written for this American edition, Michaux declares: "When I went on a journey to Asia twenty years ago, I was innocent enough to believe that I could give my impressions, and perhaps above everything I exulted in the great multiform, living challenge of the Asiatic peoples to our terrible Western monotony. Long live the last resistants!" And the next paragraph continues: "As well as exulting, I certainly made propaganda, after my own fashion, for an endless variety of civilizations. (Down with the idea of only one!)"

For me at least, this good-natured, sentimental, idealistic bravado of twenty years later has its pathos. Michaux, though infinitely alive intellectually and in sensibility, has no more conceptual coherence than the

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Wendell Wilkie of *One World*. A "civilization" that "the masses of men" will make up from "their own personality" is what Michaux still wants in 1949 while at the same time he wants the endless variety of form typified by the Eastern civilizations in one lump. The abundance of the Hindu imagination transfixed him as though the whole land were a single mural. And yet with what finesse he distinguishes a Southern Hindu from a Himalayan, a Hindu from an Arab. Like a schoolboy on a holiday, the principle of his life is the experience of novelty. He manipulates the power to reject or accept a phenomenon in terms of emotional values as a potentate would manipulate whims for food.

There is love in passing, but implied in the most casual of manners: the traveler notates his normal diversions. No individual experience per se has his concern. Every phenomenon—woman, beggar, animal, music—appears as a typical manifestation of the place of the moment. Nothing but the typical exists, but this in a constant play of nuance and differentiation—like his surprisingly contrasting reactions to the Chinese and Japanese theaters; pro the former, con the latter. Obviously, only a wide-eyed, completely self-sufficient foreigner could be at once so impartial and so susceptible, so faithful to the distinguishing characteristic and so glibly generalizing. It is a *grand talent* shown here by Henri Michaux, but it has, alas, its involuntary charlatanism.

The equation between monotony and variety, oneness and manyness, will just not work here beyond a strictly aesthetic perspective; a fact which Michaux—with the conscientious air of one who can say, "It is impossible to think of India without being a Communist"—wishes implicitly not to admit. He wants to think that "Gandhi is right to maintain that India is one" and that perhaps it is "only the White man who sees a thousand Indias." Is Michaux not relying on his sweetness of temper and ingratiating style to claim more of our indulgence than his ideas command? He is caught in the act of apologizing for his apprehension not only of Hindu multiplicity of kind and number, but also for probing into all Asia's inwardly disjunct magnitude. For, after all, if Gandhi can claim the fact of India's unity, why could not a super-Gandhi (given the efficient motive) claim the fact of Asia's unity? The validity of ideas of *unification* (as distinct from those of *logical unity* which are a formal matter) depends on the organic character of the particular idea, on which in turn its practicability, or utility in action, would depend. But of actual social and political unifications, Michaux gives merely the vaguest of hints, and he indicates no known or unknown program for a Western "absorption" of the Eastern civilizations or vice versa.

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To *reread* Michaux's book might mean to convert his vivacious flow of novelties, with their unfailing authentic ring, into the parade of a dilettante's good times in Marco-Polo Land. How marvelous the descriptions of all the "unknown" fish; how vervy the reference to "Mr. Elephant" on his way to make love; how priceless the epithet of "eunuch" for the generic lion of Chinese art—and there never was such a delightful portrait of "the" weeping willow! Is all this to prove that Asiatic humanity is not merely on a par with European humanity but can teach it a few things? Michaux asserts we would also have a lot to learn from a "miners' civilization" or even a "Tennessee Valley civilization." He suggests that the Chinese can teach us the pacific virtue, the Hindus a more sincere love for Jesus Christ. While he is unable to entirely conceal that he is for a controlled world—for even, as he explicitly says, a "science" of "how to make civilizations"—Michaux's propaganda for Asiatic elements tends to end up as a drug on the civilizations market. Surely there is a benevolent fallacy to his somewhat too calisthenic display of taste and sensibility. In drive, it is a little too close to the unconscious Stalinism of many left-thinking liberals who feel that all one has to do to make the white men rush to establish a world confederacy, like ants to a honey pile, is to prove that the brown, the yellow, and the black men have faults, contradictions, and absurdities "just like us," besides some of the rarest virtues in the world.

As for Michaux's basic aesthetics, it seems something of a sophistication. Huysmans' hero, Des Esseintes, and Rimbaud's hallucinations seem more *proper* expressions of the Western capacities for, first, artificializing nature (cf. Michaux on Chinese craftsmanship) and, second, the evocation of violently married opposites, such as Michaux instances in his discovery of Hindu prayer that it is "a rape." Michaux's minor epic, as witty and highly readable as it is, seems aesthetically out of date as a serious document, and ambiguous in social message to the point of unpardonable political naivete.

Parker Tyler

REVOLUTION AND DICTATORSHIP

THREE WHO MADE A REVOLUTION: A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY. By Bertram D. Wolfe. Dial Press. $5.00.

I welcome the publication of Mr. Wolfe's book not only because it is an extremely well written and richly documented biography of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, but also because it represents what I con-

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sider a proper approach to the solution of the "Russian enigma." Of late, several attempts have been made to find a clue to the peculiarities of the Soviet regime in such historical abstractions as "Byzantinism," the "Mongol legacy," or the "Congregational spirit" of the Russian people, with not too convincing results as far as I am concerned. In his introductory chapter, Mr. Wolfe too has indulged in broad historical generalizations not all of which I am prepared to accept without reservations. But the bulk of his study is properly devoted to a detailed investigation of the *immediate* revolutionary background in Russia, of the *specific* conditions under which the Bolshevik party was born and grew, and it is there that he is looking for the solution of the problem. In his case, a concern with historic continuity has not led to a neglect of the element of change, and he knows that the Bolshevik venture was a radically new departure in the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. Neither does he embrace that fatalistic point of view according to which the triumph of Bolshevism was predetermined by the whole course of Russian history. Even if the Three whose political biography he has written did not *make* the revolution they certainly used the opportunity to impose upon it their own designs and thus to shape its destinies. Herein lies the justification of Mr. Wolfe's biographical approach.

With great skill, Mr. Wolfe has woven into a convincing pattern the various episodes in the career of his protagonists and the political events of the period. What emerges is an amazing picture of the gradual rise of a small but determined minority to a strategic position which enabled them to seize power in the moment of a great national crisis. "Give us an organization of revolutionaries, and we will turn Russia upside down," said Lenin early in the century, and this was what he proceeded to do in 1917. The present volume brings the story to the outbreak of the war in 1914, and I understand that Mr. Wolfe is working on its sequel. But one can anticipate some of his main findings from what he tells us in *Three Who Made a Revolution*. One cannot read his account without coming to the conclusion that the totalitarian nature of the Soviet regime, with all its by now familiar features, had its seeds in Lenin's revolutionary design. Great as the changes have been from 1917 to the present, in its fundamentals Stalin's policy is a further development of Leninism. Back in 1917 an attempt was made to impose "socialism" on a materially and psychologically unprepared country, in expectation of a social revolution in the West, and this original decision has determined the nature and the policies of the Soviet regime up to this day. A totalitarian dictatorship became the only means for the Russian Communists to maintain themselves in power, in the face of "hostile

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surroundings" at home and abroad which were of their own making.

While Mr. Wolfe clearly understands the dialectics of this development, he tends to exaggerate the "democratic" elements in Lenin's prerevolutionary thinking. If, as Mr. Wolfe himself says, any form of democracy must include "control of political and economic apparatus by the people, and not the reverse," then Lenin was not a democrat at any point in his career. Authoritarianism was always there, explicit or implicit. Neither do I believe that Lenin was a "peasantophile," in the old Narodnik (populist) tradition. His recognition of the importance of the peasantry was based on considerations of political strategy alone, and no sentiment was involved. As I see it, of a similarly "instrumental" nature was Lenin's idea of national self-determination.

Space does not permit me to list errors in factual details which I have discovered here and there in Mr. Wolfe's volume. It is a pity to find them in a work of such merit, but I hasten to add that, irritating as they are, they do not impair the book's general significance and methodological value.

Michael Karpovich

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VARIETY

JAMES JOYCE AND REBECCA WEST

Back in the 20's, Rebecca West was shopping, when she suddenly realized what was wrong with Joyce. Out of this experience, she distilled a little essay of some two hundred and twenty pages, which she called *The Strange Necessity*. As far as I knew, Joyce made no reply.

A few months ago, however, I happened to hear Padraic Colum say that this essay had irritated Joyce profoundly. That his critic had had her illumination while about to buy some bonnets was a thing that seemed to leave a particularly bitter sting. His anger overflowed into the book that he was writing. Namely—*Finnegans Wake*.

Forty bonnets is a phrase which he uses a number of times in *Finnegans Wake*. According to Mr. Colum, every time it is used, it's a reference to Miss West. For example, take a passage on page 552. This deals with a Dublin Viking who, at his wife's behest, erected a cathedral — making the proviso that she'd sit naked in its altar.

. . . . *she sass her nach* . . the passage runs . . *chilly bombom and forty bonnets, upon the altar-stane*. . . . Or—

The lady sits naked. The lady's rump is cold. And—

. . *and forty bonnets* . .

"This," said Mr. Colum, "is an allusion to Miss West."

He did not elaborate. But—what is the allusion? Joyce is saying something harsh. But—what's he saying? And how did Miss Rebecca West get into this business of a Viking and his wife?

The passage Mr. Colum mentioned is part of a longer passage. Its theme is *building*. The building of all buildings. Of all cathedrals. Religion, Science, Art, Culture, Civilization. The passage is full of universals. And, at the same time, it is full of particulars: particular buildings and particular builders.

The story of the Viking is told on many levels. It becomes the story of various Vikings, who built various cathedrals. In these cathedrals, various women sit—with a chilly bottom—on various altars. For instance, there is the Viking chief. His wife sits in the heart of the altar. . . *chilly bombom* . . Her bum is cold.

There is another builder. Earwicker — Finnegan. He lives in Dublin too. He has Viking sires. And—what woman sits in the middle of his altar? His daughter Isobel.

On page 246, she is called *Icy-la-Belle*. Now—*icy* equals *chilly* . . *Bom! bom!* is the sound of a bell. Or—in other words—*Icy-la-Belle* is a *chilly bombom*.

Ibsen is a builder too. He is a Viking too. He's one of Joyce's mentors. He's one of Joyce's sym-

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bols of the Artist-Builder. Ibsen has a character—Master-Builder Solness. The latter is Ibsen's symbol of the Artist-Builder.

Who sits in the middle of the Ibsen altar? Who sits in the heart of the Solness altar? It's Hilda Wangel.

Hilda—Hild'—is not far from *chilled* . . While, in the Scandinavian tongues, the word *wange* stands for *cheeks*—or *buttocks*. Thus—*Hilda Wangel* equals *chilly buttocks*. Or—*chilly bombom*.

But—there is another builder. Joyce. James Joyce. He is a Dublin man. He has Viking blood. He is a symbol of the Artist-Builder.

Who sits in Joyce's altar? Not the young Hilda Wangel. It is an older Ibsen woman. It is Rebecca West of Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*.

It is Miss Rebecca West.

How does Rebecca West qualify as a *chilly bombom?* Well—she's a *chilly bombom* because she is a rather *chilly*, a rather *cheeky ass*.

That is how Miss Rebecca got into the Viking's altar. But—what is the meaning? the function? the relevance of her *forty bonnets?*

Well—what's a *bonnet?*

A *bonnet* is a lady's hat. But—why *forty?*

A *bonnet* is a Scottish hat. Joyce must have taken his cognizance of this meaning. For, as if to balance it, he uses another Scottish word: *stane . . upon the altarstane*. But—why *forty?*

A *bonnet* is the second stomach of an animal which chews its cud. When we consider that Rebecca West's *Strange Necessity* took some two hundred and twenty pages, this meaning has its relevance. But—once again—why are there exactly *forty?*

A *bonnet* is a gambler's decoy or accomplice.

At this point in my inquiry, I noticed a similarity of *chilly bombom and forty bonnets* to *Ali Baba and the forty thieves*.

A decoy. A come-on. A gambler's accomplice. Or—in other words—a *bonnet* is a thief.

I noticed, too, the word *muezzatinties*. (This occurs a few lines before the reference to *bonnets*.) *Muezzatinties* is a blend: *mezzotints* and *muezzin*. *Muezzin* is a bit of counterpoint and a preparation for Ali Baba and the thieves.

But what is the relevance of *Ali Baba and the forty thieves?*

This phrase is associated with *Open Sesame!* We have mentioned Hilda Wangel. Let us now take note that the word *wangala* is a term for *sesame*. This is an added sign that Joyce had the phrase *Open Sesame!* in his mind.

So—

A *chilly bombom* plus *forty bonnets* equals an *Open Sesame*. A *chilly bombom* equals a *chilly ass*. Or—in other words—a chilly ass plus a couple of bonnets gives an Open Sesame.

The relevance of this becomes apparent as soon as we return to our original set of facts: Rebecca

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West was buying bonnets when she experienced her revelation—when she got her key to Art—her Open Sesame to the treasures in the caves of Joyce.

As for the phrase *she sass her nach* . . She is an Englishwoman. She is a Saxon. Or—to use the Irish term—a *sassenach.*

At this point, I began to wonder whether Joyce was drawing any conclusions from the name *Rebecca West,* or from its component parts, *West* and *Rebecca.*

Now—a *rebecca* is a salmon poacher.

In *Finnegans Wake,* the *salmon* is a wisdom-symbol. The *salmon* is such a symbol in the old Irish legends. The word, furthermore, is similar in sound to *Solomon.* Thus —*Rebecca* is a poacher in the domains of wisdom.

As for the word *West*—Miss West wangles, (*Wangels*), into the middle of the altar. But—as a matter of fact—*West* is that part of a church which is opposite to the altar.

As for *Rebecca West*—

In Ibsen's *Rosmersholm,* Rebecca West was a woman who attempted to escape from her petty bourgeois origins. She went as far as murder. *She got away with murder.*

But—no matter what she did—she remained a petty bourgeois.

This, I take it, is what Joyce says about Rebecca West.

Nathan Halper

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CORRESPONDENCE

MORE ABOUT THE POUND AWARD

Sirs:

It has been called to my attention that my comments on the Pound Award in the May PARTISAN REVIEW carried an imputation of dishonesty on the part of the Fellows in American Letters. I made no such charge. I did say that both the vote and the justifying principle given out in the papers *evaded* every question raised by the prize except the purely literary issue. The suspension of human in favor of literary judgments seems to me a great error and a pretty dangerous one. Each Fellow who voted for Pound had arrived at this position in his own way, and in my comment I tried to guess how. I have never for a moment doubted the honesty of motive of any of these men.

Karl Shapiro

Sirs:

As one who has followed the controversy raging over Ezra Pound during the past few months, I should like to take advantage of your invitation to your readers to send in opinions to offer up a few of my own for what they may be worth.

First, it is probably better for us to make the issues entirely clear at the outset. Ezra Pound is a man and a poet. As a man he is responsible to human society for the acts which he commits as a public man; as a poet he is responsible to human society to produce the best poetry of which he is capable.

Ezra Pound as a man has joined forces with the organized evil of fascism and all that it entails: pogroms, Buchenwald, etc. As a poet he has constructed an immense autobiographical poem in which he gives utterance to the doctrines of fascism.

The man Pound has been judged and found to be insane by the United States Government, so that problem is not our concern. Our problem is that of deciding the worth of his poetry.

Before going further, I should say that I regard Pound, next to William Butler Yeats, as the finest poet of his time. I feel that as a poet his contribution to human civilization has been too great to be safely underestimated. He has taken us into areas of human experience peculiar to our time and explored them with more thoroughness than any of his contemporaries, not forgetting Eliot.

But should Pound have been awarded the Bollingen Prize? The prize, we must keep in mind, is awarded to Pound the man; it can not be awarded to a volume of poetry. In all honesty, I can only reply in the negative. I did not consider the latest addition to Pound's *Cantos* to be the best poetry of the year; my own ballot would have gone to Mr. Tate for his recent collection. But, leaving that aside, Pound must take the consequences of his acts, and those consequences are the inevitable results of treason. I would see no harm in the judges saying that they considered Pound's volume the best of the year, but that, because of his acts, they must withhold the prize from him.

Perhaps this is an unsatisfactory solution; I must confess that I am not sure. After all, how many of Pound's contemporaries have shared or still share the same beliefs? Yet, by not acting upon them, or by acting only with words, they have escaped censure.

Mr. Tate goes into a rage in your latest issue due to a triumph of misreading that is surely unusual in a critic of Mr. Tate's undoubted prowess at close reading. However, has Mr. Tate ever condemned the treatment of Negroes in the South? Has Mr. Eliot ever condemned the atrocities of Dachau and Buchenwald, which were di-

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rected at the "free-thinking Jew" for whom Mr. Eliot has little or no place in his Christian Society? Why have most of our best poets and critics been engaged, from time to time, in a coy flirtation with fascism? It is a question that some future literary critic will have to answer. Mann's *Doctor Faustus* seems to give us a partial explanation, but even he has not covered all the aspects of the twentieth century artist. Perhaps we are still too close to our contemporaries to make the final act of evaluation, but we can help to clear the air a bit for the future critic and his readers. Providing, of course, that literature will still exist in the future world.

In the meantime, one hopes that Mr. Tate has not as yet challenged the editors to a fine Southern duel.

Henry A. Woodfin, Jr.

Buffalo, N. Y.

Sirs:

About Pound and the Bollingen *Prize*. Not one of the judges who awarded the prize is an anti-Semite in any sense, and I think we all know it. If Mr. Barrett felt himself accused of anti-Semitism, he would resent it as much as Mr. Tate did, and I imagine he could clear the thing up with Mr. Tate by assuring him that he intended no such insinuation. There is nothing ugly or vicious in Mr. Eliot's social ideas, or in his poetry except as it reflects the world of his experience. Mr. Davis cannot really believe that there is, though he seems to credit Eliot with a metaphor of his own invention: the Jews as "carriers of disintegrative rationalism"—carriers being indeed an ugly word here.

As a Roman Catholic, I consider myself Semitic rather than anti-Semitic. Any mania on the subject has always seemed to me not only deplorable but low and meaningless, like swearing; I thought it got into Pound's work like all the other passions and special vocabularies that are there, partly at least because he was a collector and included low life in his collection. It made me angry when the Fascist fantasy, and the old, artist's grievance against the United States and Great Britain, put him at the service of Italians who never took him seriously as a Fascist or anything else, in the propaganda war. If he was not sane, he was not responsible, and the doctors think he was not sane. But how could anyone fail to understand Mr. Greenberg's feeling, or Mr. Shapiro's? I share them. Anti-Semitism, mad or sane, must prejudice any artist in all our minds.

Prejudices, good or ill, may be disconcerted by works of art. However unlikely it might seem that the most beautiful poetry of 1948 should have appeared in Pound's *Pisan Cantos*, that is nevertheless the case. And anti-Semitism is not quite invisible in them, but it is almost. Mr. Barrett quoted three fragments, a total of seven lines, as if they were representative, but the fact is that there are no others in 118 pages devoted to other material. The cantos do not so much "transform" objectionable stuff as keep away from it; after a note or two of Fascist bravado, and the flings quoted by Mr. Barrett, they are occupied with personal memories and some fine images and affirmations. The Bollingen judges were awarding a prize for *poetry*, and there it is.

It is a little hard to say just what they could be said to have done for Pound in conferring the prize on his work. Were they honoring him? There were no ceremonies in the prison yard. I doubt that you can honor someone unless he is in a position to be honored, and that is scarcely Pound's position; it is incongruous to think, in Mr. Howe's phrase, of extending a hand in congratulation. Perhaps the judges forgave him, or forgave him enough to permit recognition of his work.

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Life includes and is more important than art, as Mr. Greenberg says, and the category of the aesthetic is not the primary one, as Mr. Barrett says. In life we find great errors and vices mixed up with the good in people whom we value. In life we sometimes give amnesty to enemies when they are harmless. The judges might have thought it unnecessary to note that Pound will not broadcast again and that nobody is going to read his broadcasts. There remain some remarkable pages of verse, the product of forty years in poetry and of the aesthetic integrity that Mr. Shapiro mentions with admiration.

Robert Fitzgerald

New York City

Sirs:

I wish to thank the Editors of PARTISAN REVIEW for the opportunity of expressing my opinion as a reader, of the Bollingen Award given to Ezra Pound. I believe that the implications of the issue involved warrant comment by those outside the confines of professional authors, and trust that the Editors will assign greater weight to my sincerity than to my unprofessional literary skill, in deciding whether to publish this letter.

The attitude of those who support the thesis of art-for-art's sake is just as great a naiveté as the attitude of those who stomp for free speech as an absolute concept. These misguided persons seem to be incapable of ever understanding that a relative concept such as "free speech" cannot possibly be confined to a rigorous and mutually exclusive definition. Free speech does not exist in a vacuum; it operates always as a mode of human relationships and must therefore be interpreted in the light of present circumstances of a given situation. Obviously, the type of free speech which leads to the abrogation of all free speech cannot be tolerated. For precisely the same reason, the expression of antisemitism which hides behind the metaphysical skirts of art-for-art's sake, cannot be tolerated. Antisemitism in art is more insidious than the Fascist rabble rouser, but just as effective a contributory factor to the dissolution of all free expression.

Is Ezra Pound a great poet? I don't know—I am not qualified to judge. But let us say that he is just that. Does it give him the divine right to degrade his fellow human beings? Isn't there more to living than Art in all its forms? What do I care for the elevation of Art to the dizziest heights of achievement, if I, as a human being, risk suffering the humiliation and agony of fascist oppression.

Mr. Barrett agreed with Mr. Shapiro that "fascism is part of the 'myth' of the *Cantos* generally—and that it can be found in *The Pisan Cantos* too."

Modern history has indelibly stamped our memories with the method of fascist development in a country, and who will deny that antisemitism is without exception one of the favorite tools?

Ezra Pound is a proven traitor to his country; a more meet award would have been the chopping off of his literary head. But no— he has been honored with a literary prize, just to prove the validity of absolute criteria!

Gloat! Thou God of Reaction—thy dupes are many—

S. D. Lovejoy

Philadelphia, Pa.

Sirs:

I sympathize with all the contributors to the recent symposium on Pound, especially with Allen Tate (O God! How I sympathize with Allen Tate!) but I feel that all of them missed the point.

If we believe that in giving an award to Pound we are implicitly honoring his social attitudes, then let us consider *all* the social attitudes expressed

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in the poem. If antisemitism were the only thing in the Cantos, then perhaps we would be justified in withholding the award. But Pound also expressed his belief in the Confucian ethic and metaphysic, his condemnation of war, the realization of his own hardness, his attack on human vanity and pretensions. We may not hold all these beliefs, but we are implicitly honoring them too, and they are worthy of honor.

It is by no means evident that all the materials of the poem are ugly or vicious or debased. Let us condemn only what is condemnable in the poem, and give praise to the rest. That is, I think, the position of the Fellows, and should be the position of all of us.

Gordon Ringer

Beverly Hills, Calif.

Mr. Tate's outburst in the May, 1949 PARTISAN REVIEW seems to me to be about as good an explanation as we have had for the action of the American Fellows in awarding the Bollingen prize to Ezra Pound. Mr. Tate's disregard for what Mr. Barrett had to say in his original article, his over-sensitive reaction to his own invented charge of antisemitism, are sufficient illustration of the type of mind that would be able to judge art "for art's sake." One needs a compartmentalized rather than a well-integrated mind to make such judgments.

Of the three Bollingen judges who had something to say in the May PARTISAN REVIEW, two did not express themselves as opposed to giving an award to Ezra Pound. And it is, perhaps, significant that it was these same two judges who expressed subjective assumption after subjective assumption. Note Mr. Auden's comments: He implies that he holds with his second theory of art, which presupposes such antique beliefs as "All created existence is a good," etc. Scientifically

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speaking, such assumptions are no more reasonable than that other hangover from witchcraft, that "All created existence is bad." The rest of Mr. Auden's statement is on the same level. He says that antisemitism is a feeling which all gentiles feel at times— but how does he know? (Incidentally, from this statement of his, we may be sure that he, at least, has occasional feelings of antisemitism, according to his own confession.) And then he sets himself up as one who is mature enough to read anything, although there are some things which must be kept from those who have "not yet reached the age of consent" (i.e., the rabble).

Mr. Tate's protestation against a charge that wasn't even made is some evidence that he has the very feelings he denies; he apparently harbors deep sensitivity on the subject of antisemitism. This makes him suspect since it is a well-known psychological fact that we do not get so excited about charges of which we are sure we are innocent. In short, Mr. Tate seemed to prove the very point that he was attempting to deny: that is, that so far as he was concerned, the Bollingen award *was* prompted by feelings of antisemitism. In addition to this, we have Auden's confession of antisemitism. Then, from what we already know of Eliot, Warren, et. al., it seems entirely possible that there was enough antisemitism among the American Fellows to at least influence their decision. Mr. Tate's letter puts this conclusion well within the realm of possibility.

All this means, of course, that I for one thoroughly disagree with those who hail the 1948 Bollingen Award as a triumph of liberalism. My first reaction, upon seeing the press dispatch about the award, was one of admiration for the spirit of independent coolness displayed by the judges. But sober contemplation made me realize the emotional nature of that first reaction. I knew instantly that professional Americans—the Legion, the D.A.R. and company—would oppose the award, hence I emotionally hailed it. But distasteful as it is to be on the same side as the 100 percenters, in this case I find no alternative. Any thoughts, however expressed, which have had the consequences that thoughts like Ezra Pound's have had, cannot be judged apart from their effects. The purpose of writing is, after all, communication, and surely Pound meant to communicate more than mere "form"; what he meant to convey has been discussed at length. The fact that the Bollingen judges say they were able to disregard Pound's content leads inevitably to one of these conclusions: either that Pound's poetry failed as communication, for them, and should therefore not have been termed art, or else that the Bollingen judges did *in fact* consider Pound's meaning, and that this meaning influenced them (unconsciously if not consciously) to give him an award as 1948's outstanding poet.

Thomas Ford Hoult

Downey, Calif.

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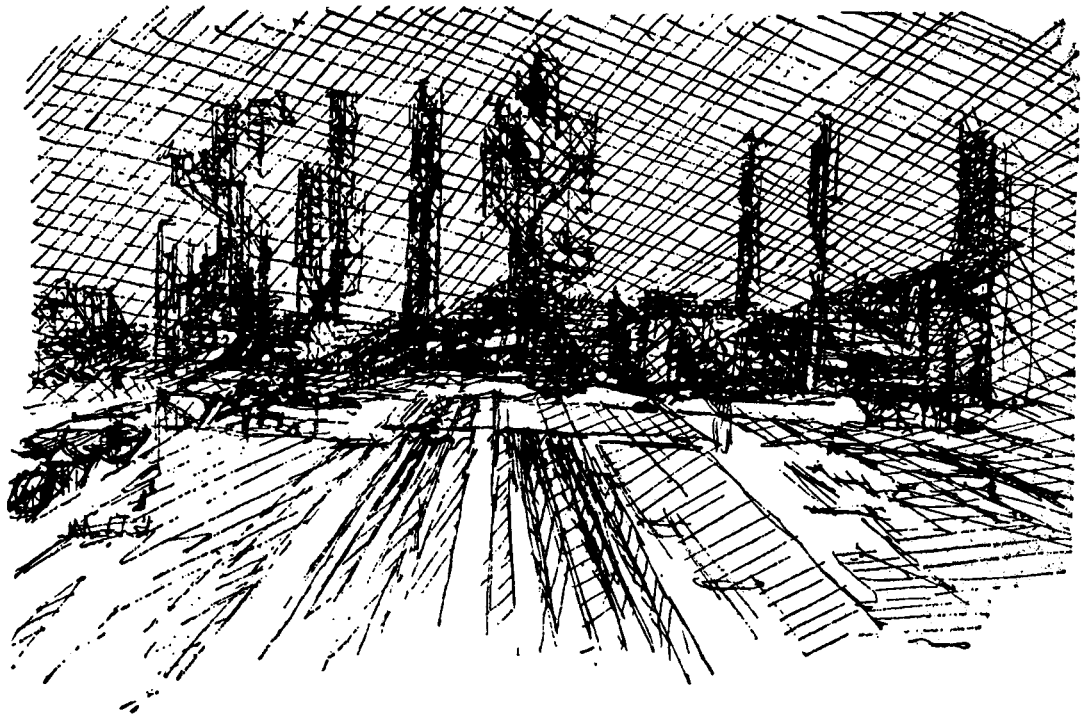

JACQUES VILLON. Pen and ink drawing. Circa 1942.

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